FEBRUARY 2011 | #113 | £4 / €7 / $13
WWW.DEVELOP-ONLINE.NET

develop

GAME DESIGN | CODING | ART | SOUND | BUSINESS

THE TOP 16 UK GAMES DEVELOPERS

...AND HOW TO STEAL THEIR JOBS

BLITZ TECH

BlitzTech. Bringing great games
WITHIN REACH
Cross-platform development solution with fully integrated motion control – game pad, Kinect, Move

BlitzTech.com/licensing

IMAGINATION STUDIOS

New Proprietary Facial Animation Technology....in your house, on your terms!

Face Animation
Animation (Mocap and Keyframe)
Ingame and Rendered Animation
Modeling and Texturing

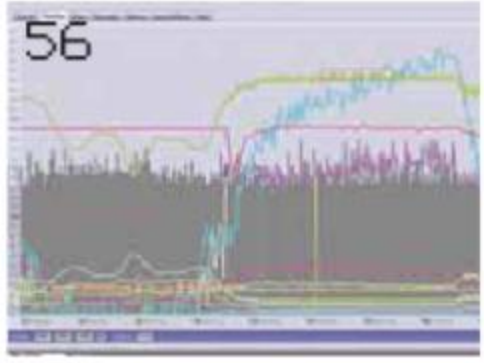
Performance Capture
Storyboards and Animatics
Rigging and Skinning
Special Effects

100% Guarantee
Compositing and Rendering
Concept Art and Illustration
Video Editing

+46 (0)18-106930

WWW.IMAGINATIONSTUDIOS.COM

info@imaginationstudios.com



Contents

DEVELOP ISSUE 113 FEBRUARY 2011

ALPHA

05 - 08 › DEV NEWS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE
The findings of the Livingston-Hope skills report analysed, Italian studios face up to the country's industry crisis and tout a time of renaissance, and EMI and KPM MusicHouse on providing music for games

12 - 16 › OPINION AND ANALYSIS
Nick Gibson addresses the oppotunity for core games on Facebook, David Braben considers the plight of the games reviewer, and Tatiana Kruse focuses attention on the subtleties of trade mark infringement

18 - 19 › THE DEVELOP DIARY
A guide to everything you need to know about February 2011, and a look at April's Festival of Games, plus; key events for the coming months

BETA

22 - 25 › TOP UK 16 GAME DEVELOPERS
The UK dev elite and how they scored the sector's most desirable jobs

27 - 30 › GET THE CAREER YOU WANT
Recruiters and developers on where the jobs are, and how to get them

33 - 35 › RECRUITMENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA
Are the likes of LinkedIn and Facebook really a reliable resource for job seekers?

37› 2011 SALARY SURVEY: THE RESULTS
The results of *Develop's* extensive salary survey

39 - 41 › HOMEWARD BOUND
Sony explains why its online platform Home is increasingly hard to ignore

47 - 49 › SPOTLIGHT ON CAMBRIDGE
Leading figures from one of the UK's largest hubs explain what makes the city tick

BUILD

54 - 55 › MORPHEME 3
NaturalMotion details the new version of its animation tech

56 › TELEMETRY
RAD Game Tools' profiling solution goes under the microscope

60 › CUBIC MOTION
How the facial animation firm is contributing to Deus Ex: Human Revolution

62 › APPS-TO-NETBOOK PORTING
An in-depth guide from Intel on harnessing the huge netbook user market

develop DIRECTORY 65-71

STUDIOS, TOOLS, SERVICES AND COURSES

CODA

72-74 › AN OFFBEAT LOOK AT THE INDUSTRY
The true meaning of 'shared sweat equity', and Ed Fries on mechanical calculators

WHAT'S YOUR SUPER POWER?

Crytek is always looking for the superheroes of tomorrow. Designers, Artists, Programmers, Animators, ... If you are passionate about your superpower and want to share the excitement and enthusiasm that we feel for creating great games, then we would love to hear from you.

CURRENT JOB OFFERS

Apply today at crytek.com/career

R&D TOOLS ENGINEER | Frankfurt, Germany

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR | Kiev, Ukraine

LEAD GAME ENGINEER | Kiev, Ukraine

SENIOR ANIMATION ENGINEER | Budapest, Hungary

SENIOR NETWORK ENGINEER | Budapest, Hungary

SENIOR R&D SOFTWARE ENGINEER | Nottingham, UK

© 2010 Crytek GmbH. Crytek and CryENGINE are registered trademarks or trademarks of Crytek GmbH in the USA, Germany and/or other countries. All rights reserved.

"As developers, we all like to bemoan the odd game review from time to time."
David Braben, p14

Can core games work on Facebook?
p12

EMI discusses music licensing intricacies
p8

Chair's Infinity Blade assessed in-depth
p10

Skills review to help UK dev sector raise its game

Livingstone-Hope report reveals poor awareness around careers in video games – but knowledge as bad amongst developers and teachers ● Review's recommendations to 'transform' UK into global games talent hub

by Michael French

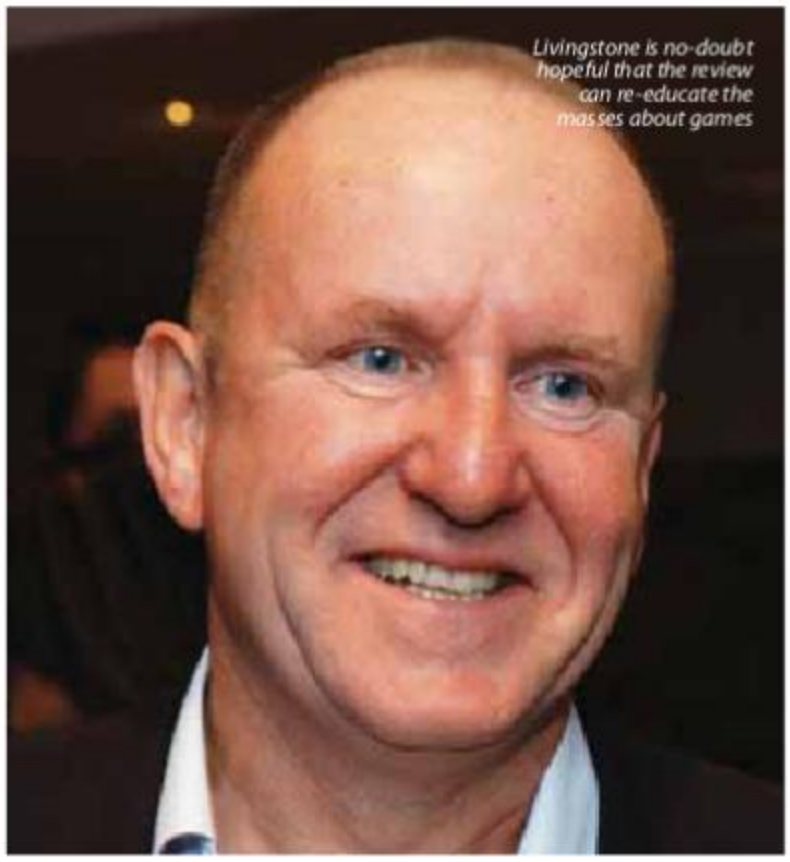
A GOVERNMENT-backed skills review will this month prove how UK education is failing to fulfil the dreams of budding games developers.

The Livingstone-Hope Review, published by the time you read this, will expose a serious level of misunderstanding amongst educators – but also suggests action that could transform the UK into the best source of talent for the games and visual effects industries.

Culture minister Ed Vaizey commissioned the review back in July 2010, asking Square Enix's life president Ian Livingstone and Alex Hope – founder of UK VFX house Double Negative – to produce an Independent Review of Skills for the UK's two digital entertainment sectors.

While the review's recommendations were still being written at the time of going to press, *Develop* has seen the findings – and they reveal a shocking lack of knowledge amongst UK educators and students.

The report has found that 'there are very low levels of public awareness of the strength of the UK in video games development and visual effects professions'.



Livingstone is no-doubt hopeful that the review can re-educate the masses about games

In detail, the report discovered that:

Only **three per cent** of young people know that *Grand Theft Auto* and *SingStar* were made in the UK.

Only **nine per cent** of young people know that the VFX for inception and *Harry Potter* were made in the UK.

Only **19 per cent** of teachers know that *GTA* and *SingStar* were made in the UK.

Plus, young people, parents and teachers do not know about "the skills needed to thrive in these industries". Many think that 'information and computing technology' is more useful than core maths and physics, but the Review's findings effectively condemn ICT as it is currently taught with a focus on word processors and spreadsheets.

> ***"Only three per cent of young people know that GTA and SingStar were made in the UK."***

"As such, it is not relevant for the video games sector," the Review's findings, revealed to *Develop*, bluntly conclude – and its research can prove it.

Amongst teachers, key findings showed that only **one per cent** of teachers (and barely any young people) know that physics is the most important subject for a career in video games;

Only **14 per cent** of teachers (and three per cent of young people) think maths is the most important subject for a career in either industry.

Almost **half of teachers** (44 per cent) think that ICT is the most important subject to aid a career in games – and that means school leavers are just ill-equipped when universities are expected to turn ambitious pupils into competent developers and technicians.

A massive **66 per cent** of course assessors said they are concerned about applicant quality. Half of them said that the STEM skills of school-leavers are inadequate, with 40 per cent singling out the poor quality of mathematics. 40 per cent of course assessors would like to see better programming skills, while 40 per cent of respondents stress that the poor quality of school leavers has a negative impact on their courses. Meanwhile, 70 per cent of course assessors report a poor understanding of the games industry.

The recommendations for how UK educators and the industry must work harder are published February 1st at: **www.nesta.org.uk**

ABOUT THE REVIEW

The Livingstone-Hope review has been produced with NESTA and Skillset and undertook seven separate strands of research for its completion, which included: a survey of 564 young people, a survey of 918 parents, a survey of 403 teachers, interviews with 19 course assessors at the UK universities producing the best specialist graduates for the sector, a survey of 224 UK video games companies, and an online survey that was completed by 910 people currently working or seeking to work in the UK video games industry.

Editorial

Up close and personnel

LIKE EVERYONE in any way affiliated with games, I'm often asked how to go about getting a job making them.

I've been sent elaborate design docs, had email enquiries from primary school teachers, and fielded phone calls from people trying to get through to Miyamoto.

We all know the answers to give the ones that aren't nutters. Pay attention in school, focus on maths and physics, and be passionate.

Going by the results of the Livingstone-Hope review, there's still a long way to go in getting that basic message across (*see previous page*) to the world outside.

But, in truth, there's still a way to go in getting that message across within the industry, too.

In fact, the thing we rarely say is that to be a successful games developer there's a certain magic – that so-called X-factor – needed to bridge the gulf between dream and success.

'Passion' doesn't just cover it. We all know that sometimes you might have to work harder, above and beyond the working day, to get what you want. Coding into the night, fielding business calls at whatever hour, responding to a publisher's request even with the tightest deadline… you know the routine.

It's an unfortunate truth that games thrive on this kind of high-burn culture. Where this becomes a problem is when that's exploited.

As I write this, *Develop Online* is uncovering THQ's admitting to intensive work needed to finish upcoming triple-A game *Homefront*. Ironically, it tells the story of a nation enslaved by invading overlords.

The blur between passion and crunch is hard to define – but something that needs to be understood to ensure a happy career.

So maybe the best bit of career advice we can give others, and ourselves, is 'Be passionate – passionate enough to fight for what you want.'

Michael French
michael.french@intentmedia.co.uk

Italy faces up to

An 'ignorant' government and a lack of funding infrastructure, but the

by Will Freeman

THE NASCENT ITALIAN video games industry is at the breaking point between renaissance – or collapse.

That's according to some of the country's most highly placed developers speaking at the recent Italian Videogame Developers Conference. In discussions with *Develop* they highlighted several obstacles to progress that will be painfully familiar to UK studios.

As well as pointing to an 'ignorant' government, members of Italy's games industry claim they are victim to a lack of both recognition and funding.

"We are in a time of crisis, and the government and the authorities keep spending on the other cultural industries, such as cinema and music," said Marco Accordi Rickards, director and chairman of the IVDC. "We need to change that, and we need to attract investment from the United States and the Italian financial institutions."

"We have major problems," agreed Spin Vector's CEO Giovanni Caturano. "Moments of crisis, though, can be moments of opportunity, and in this case that is especially true."

Despite Caturano's optimistic outlook, the challenges for studios based in Italy are manifold. Many developers at the IVDC spoke about of a lack of investment and funding infrastructure, and several suggested that the country's government is only just emerging from a period of seriously misguided understanding about games development.

"The strange thing about the Italian government and politicians is their total ignorance on the matter," revealed Accordi Rickards. "It is not just that they thought games were nothing more than low quality entertainment. It is worse. They really thought video games were the same as gambling and slot machines. They were very confused, and felt video games were very bad; even close to illegal. Just the word 'video games' became a problem."

> ***"The Italian government really thought video games were the same as gambling. They were very confused, and felt video games were very bad."***
>
> Marco Accordi Rickards, IVDC

games studio 'crisis'

challenge is an opportunity for a renaissance, insist those faced with securing Italy's game dev future

AIOMI's Raoul Carbone and IVDC's Marco Accordi Rickards (main image), Milestone's Irvin Zonca, (above), and Spin Vector's Giovanni Caturano (below)

Another challenge the Italian development sector faces will be especially familiar to those employed in the industry in other countries; a conflict between trade bodies.

"There is a very tough battle to fight," admitted Raoul Carbone, vice president and co-founder of trade body AIOMI. "There are three different associations. One is AIOMI, which is not about only developers or only publishers specifically. It is about game culture and industry. Then there is the IVD for developers and the AESVI. The two exist because they represent different interests. Sometimes they should work together and sometimes they should work for different things. The problem is the AESVI doesn't think like that. They don't want developers to be united in an association. They want to be the only one, and they don't recognise us."

But game developers in Italy insist they can instigate a renaissance.

With the games market across the country worth a respectable €1.2 billion at retail, the government is starting to take notice. Events like the IVDC have also managed to attract high profile speakers including Phil Harrison and Peter Molyneux.

"The industry here is growing, and we want to grow more, and let the world be aware of the Italian games industry," said Irvin Zonca, head of racing group at Milestone, which stands as one of Italy's most prominent studios.

"The growth is accelerating as games reach supermarkets, and casual gaming introduces more Italian people to games. Following the public, now the mainstream media is starting to notice video games. We are starting to see games on television and in magazines, which didn't happen before."

Another strength Italian developers can call on is their home nation's international reputation as a place with thousands of years standing as a creative and cultural powerhouse.

"We need to play on the strength of the familiar concept of 'Made in Italy'," says Caturano.

"It works with cars, fashion, art and even glasses, so there is no reason we can't have the same success with games."

Making Arrangements

EMI and its subsidiary KPM MusicHouse are looking to strengthen bonds with game developers hoping to source licensed and original audio. **Will Freeman** talks to the KPM team to find out more…

Above: KPM MusicHouse previously commissioned Noisia to compose work for Gran Turismo. Right: Chris Jones, Zara Warshal and Nick Oakes from KPM MusicHouse

What history does EMI Music Producition and KPM MusicHouse have with working with game developers?
Nick Oakes, senior sales manager: We've been working with the games industry as a whole for a number of years. From up and coming developers in the UK and overseas to major publishers like Sony, EA, Codemasters and Konami.

How does EMI Music Production actually work with a developer when selecting and clearing music tracks?
Oakes: We're flexible on how we work but preferably we like to be involved from the earliest possible stage. If you give us a music brief and budget we'll work with you to find artists and songwriters who fit the bill for your project.

And what about KPM MusicHouse?
Zara Warshal, senior promotions exec: Production music differs from commercial music in two key ways. First of all we own both rights – the master and the publishing – for each track and they are all pre-cleared. This means when developers find a track they like they can simply download it and licence it with no approvals necessary.

Secondly we cover a huge variety of genres – as well as pop tracks we have epic action tracks, terrifying horror, sound design and we also own several well known TV theme tunes such as *Grange Hill*, *Wimbledon* and *Grandstand*.

Our music is used on big Hollywood trailers such as *The Dark Knight*, *Harry Potter*, *The Bourne Ultimatum* and *Twilight*. We have music specially written for sports and action – two areas which particularly apply to the needs of the gaming industry.

> ***"We've definitely seen a significant rise in the number of application developers approaching us over the past year in particular."***
>
> Nick Oakes, KPM MusicHouse

How does the approach to working with developers differ when offering specially composed music?
Oakes: It's pretty much the same. If you let us know upfront you're after a specially composed piece we can find you the writers best suited to the sound you're after. Recently we've had Skream write for *Wipeout*, and Noisia writing for *Gran Turismo*, and from a creative standpoint it's something more and more of our writers want to be involved in.

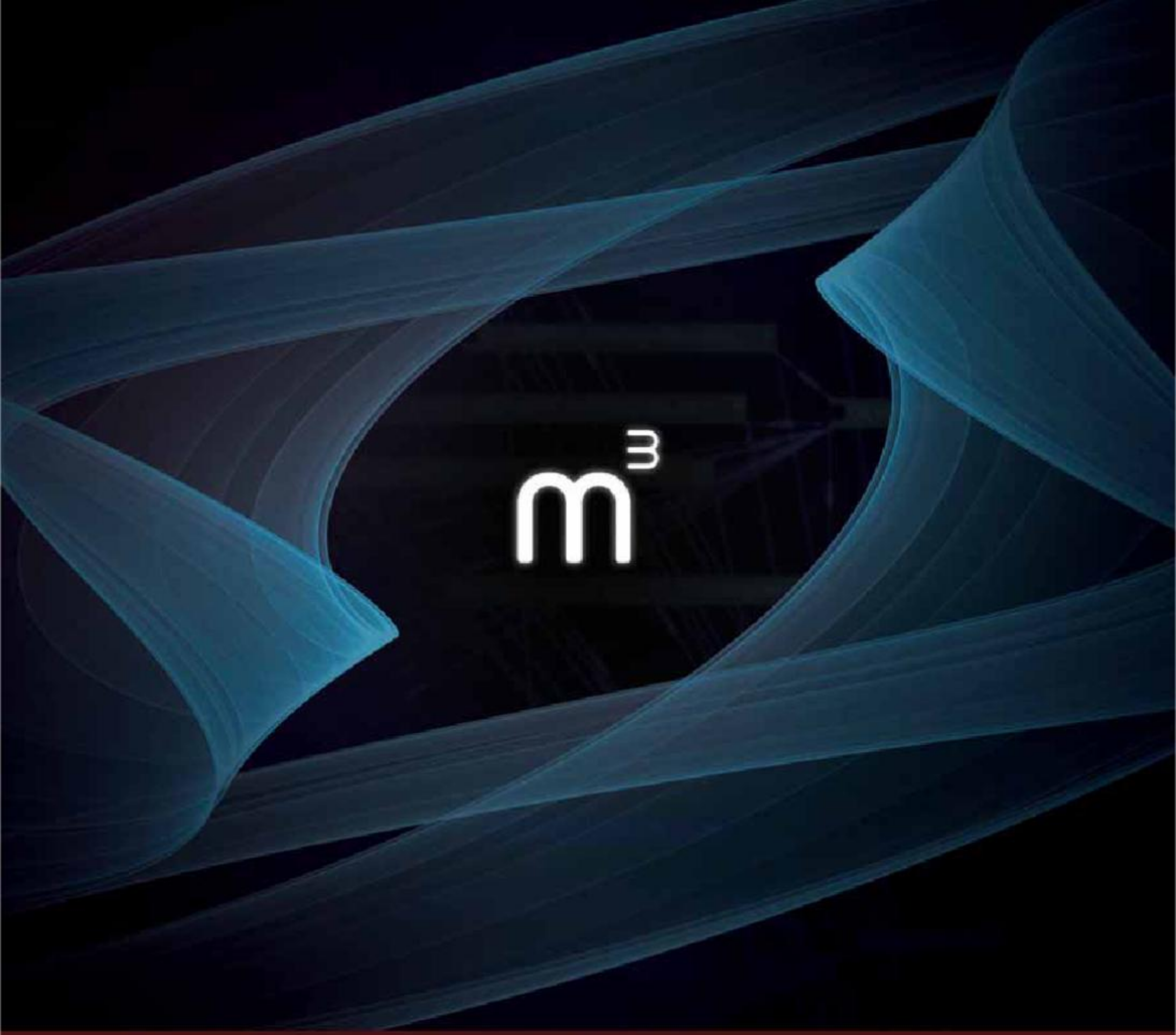
Is it financially reasonable for smaller studios to look to securing the rights for popular music?
Oakes: We've definitely seen a significant rise in the number of app developers approaching us over the past year in particular. With the diversity and range of our catalogue we can always find an artist and a song to work with your budgets.

Has it been important for the music industry to move to work more with the games industry?
Warshal: I would say there has been collaboration between the gaming and music industries as developers have started to realise the value that quality music can add to the gaming experience.

We currently have exclusive distribution rights in the UK for EndGame and EA Games' own production music libraries – a collection of original music cues created by many of the most successful video game music composers in the electronic gaming industry – including cues featured in many of these companies' best selling games such as *The Sims* and *The Lord of the Rings* game series.

What are the challenges of selecting and clearing music tracks for games in particular?
Oakes: As with everything we work on the main challenges come in managing expectations. If you have a relatively small game coming out then it's unlikely we'll be able to clear a major artist.

In cases such as this KPM MusicHouse can come into its own helping to find you top-notch production music at a fraction of the cost of commercial.
www.kpmmusichouse.com



MORPHEME 3

HAS ARRIVED

Higher performance. Streamlined workflow. Deep debugging.
The industry-leading animation engine has just got better.

For an evaluation contact **paul.topping@naturalmotion.com**

morpheme
advanced animation system

naturalmotion

www.naturalmotion.com

ANATOMY OF A BLOCKBUSTER

Our monthly dissection of a recent hit game...

Infinity Blade

Developer: Chair Entertainment/ Epic Games

Format: iOS

Price: £3.49

www.epicgames.com/infinityblade

Visually Infinity Blade capably rivals some of the prettiest PSN and XBLA offerings

THE SENSATION

Revealed at last year's Apple Worldwide Developers Conference, the early buzz around *Infinity Blade* was huge. iOS games, while undeniably capable of intelligent, surprising and at times furiously addictive gameplay, were not known for their graphical fidelity. Here, however was a game built on a modified version of the Unreal Engine 3 that looked as good, if not better, than a significant amount of titles available on XBLA and PSN. This was a statement of intent, and one people listened to. When the *Epic Citadel* tech demo app was released last September, excitement hit fever pitch. All eyes were on Chair and Epic.

THE GAME

In true pulp-fantasy style reminiscent of the writings of Robert E. Howard, *Infinity Blade* is set in a melancholy world crushed beneath the iron rule of a scheming and hateful God-King. It's up to one brave hero to assult the God-King's castle, defeate his convieniently interspersed champions and rid the land of its oppressive ruler and the Infinty Blade he wields. Except he fails, so it's really up to his son. Except he fails as well, so it's really up to his son. Except…

As generations fall to the Infinity Blade, player stats increase, weapons and armour are traded up for better models and enemies grow faster, stronger and smarter. It's a battle of attrition that tests both a player's mettle and adaptability.

And finger-slashing skills. The expansive in-game combat burns slowly, and is difficult to master, but offers a wealth of abilities that upon revealing themselves make putting the game down again a difficult process.

THE STUDIO

Chair began business back in 2005, and was initially made up of a large part of the team behind the Majesco Xbox title *Advent Rising*, including founders Donald and Geremy Mustard and CEO Ryan Holmes.

Seeking to recreate the successes of that title, the firm licensed the literary rights to the Orson Scott Card's *Empire* series of novels, the author having been behind the plot of *Advent Rising*.

Undertow, a lauded XBLA shooter, was released in 2007, and marked the beginning of a download cannon that would grow to include the hugely well received XBLA title *Shadow Complex* in 2009 and *Infinity Blade* itself late last year.

The company's acquisition by Epic Games back in 2008 cemented Chair's position as digital distribution powerhouse, and leaves the future looking very bright indeed for the firm.

UNIQUE SELLING POINT

Visually, *Infinity Blade* is a striking game. This would be true were it an XBLA or PSN title, but the fact that it is iOS acutely marks it out from its competition.

Playing the game on an iPad or iPhone leaves the impression of having played something years ahead of its time. Sunlight breaks into shafts through giant, imposing columns, shimmering back off of marble floors and highlighting the edge of the blade on your back and the teeth of the roaring level 21 cave troll up ahead. *Infinity Blade* is a pretty game.

The subtley expansive combat mechanics build on this impression, coming into their own as the game progresses and every individual fight demands a new plan, a change of tactics and a willingness to adapt quickly. It's a gamer's game on iOS, and rightly proud of it.

WHY IT WORKS

Make no mistake about it, *Infinity Blade* is infuriating. You will die. Many times over. You will see an opening, swing for a parry and realise too late that you took one chance too many. Then you will use words to express your frustration that you didn't realise you used. Herein lies the brilliantly inexplicable fun of *Infinity Blade* and gaming in general; the contrary joy of watching your character expire in a thousand pitiful ways always knowing that revenge will be had. You're learning, and your time for payback is getting closer with every death-rattle.

Chair has fundamentally grasped the very thing that makes gaming its own worthy form of entertainment, and built a fantastic title around that core understanding.

TRY IT YOURSELF

Take one steep learning curve. Add an adaptable engine capable of top flight graphics regardless of the platform it is applied to. Create a compelling central mythos for your title, built around a fantasy realm, a sci-fi galaxy, a kitchin-sink drama, anything that takes your fancy. Combine these elements around a strong level of gameplay that is easy to learn, near-impossible to master. Develop slowly for a year or two with some big gameplay reveals just before release and, presto. You've made a digital download classic.

Which game was one of the first to bring 3d 'open world' play to the racing genre?

Midtown Madness

Driver

Need for Speed

//COMMENT: BUSINESS

Facebook's Lost Users

by **Nick Gibson**, Games Investor Consulting

Above: EA has found success making hardcore games for Facebook – can you do the same?

SOCIAL NETWORKS were developed and popularised by young people, and they are still their heaviest users.

But, ironically, the booming social network games market is dominated by middle-aged housewives because younger people don't play there as much there as they do elsewhere. Why has this come about and is there an opportunity for core games targeting traditional gaming's heartland audience on social networks?

The demographic mismatch of Facebook gamers to Facebook users overall has long been one of the great incongruities of the Facebook games market. Whilst Facebook gamers are more concentrated around older users aged 25-to-54 with a clear female weighting, Facebook overall has a noticeably younger user base with 14-to-24-year-olds of both genders the dominant demographic. In absolute terms, the 14-to-24-year-old Facebook market comprises over 200 million users.

When you also consider the younger skewed alternative social networks such as MySpace and Orkut, this combines to represent a truly colossal addressable market of young people, the majority of whom have grown up (and are still) playing games. There are many reasons why 14-to-24-year-olds are so under-represented within the social network games market.

YOUNG BLOOD

The first and most obvious reason is a lack of supply of suitable games; only a small proportion of higher quality social network games are actually made for younger demographics. The viral nature of social network gaming results in the proverbial chicken and egg: most higher quality social network games are aimed at the more affluent older audience who are incentivised to recruit their friends who rapidly become the dominant user base.

Even games aimed at a broader audience have often ended up dominated by the older female players. The second reason is that companies are simply and quite sensibly following the money. The biggest group of paying players on Facebook is older females because they have the ability to pay and are most receptive to the sophisticated marketing and conversion techniques of some very savvy and commercially aggressive games companies.

> ***"The demographic mismatch of Facebook gamers to users has long been one of the great incongruities of the social games market."***

The market is at an early stage where many of these companies are driven by VC funding whose fundamental drive towards an exit means being laser-focused on maximising their most lucrative user base rather than nurturing the next generation of paying players. Since these younger players are harder to reach and monetise, the older demographic represents something of a path of least resistance.

The third major reason is that, while social network gaming largely improves on older female players' games experiences elsewhere, it currently represents a step down for younger gamers.

The young male and to a lesser extent young female gamer has several higher quality or more convenient alternatives to social network gaming including a wealth of console and handheld gaming, casual MMOGs and virtual worlds, and games portals and download services.

So, is there a viable market for this younger audience and, more specifically, will hardcore gamers ever take to social network gaming in material volume? We believe that the answer to both is yes, given time.

While Facebook games aimed at male-oriented core gamers do not necessarily result in higher daily to monthly active user ratios (an indicator of engagement), they emphatically do result in higher ARPUs and ARPPUs. We have looked under the hood of several companies doing Facebook games aimed at a more hardcore audience and they are generally monetising at rates multiple times higher than those aimed at the older female audience albeit with audiences a fraction of the size. EA recently attributed a strong increase in monetisation rates at Playfish specifically to its *Madden* and *FIFA Superstars* Facebook games.

ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE

Perhaps one of the most interesting indications of the potential of this demographic is found in recent acquisition trends. Until early-mid 2010, most social network games company acquisitions were of companies developing games for older and female players, but in the last six months there has been a clear diversification into more hardcore and male territory with Kabam's acquisition of Wonderhill, Playdom's acquisition of Hive7 and Zynga's purchase of Challenge Games.

Flash is perfectly adequate for attracting a core audience – as proven by the hundreds of millions of players registered with German browser MMOG companies – but the evolution of a younger-oriented social network games market will undoubtedly benefit from a combination of higher production values, better games design and new browser technologies such as Adobe's Molehill 3D APIs.

Nick Gibson is a director at Games Investor Consulting, providing research, strategy consulting and corporate finance services to the games, media and finance industries.
www.gamesinvestor.com

realtime:uk

- **Marketing Trailers** - pre rendered CG trailers for commercials and on-line launches.
- **Concept Movies** - Quality benchmark movies to assist the early stages of game development.
- **Press Imagery** - Print resolution stills, for box cover art, magazine covers and point of sale.
- **In-Game Animation** - In-engine animation and cut scenes production.
- **Concept Art** - Define and establish visual style.
- **Storyboard/Animatics** - Script, create, visualise; cut scenes and cinematics.

www.realtimeuk.com

TEL : 01772 682363

//COMMENT: OPINION

Reviewers can't win

by **David Braben**, Frontier Developments

Right: Kinectimals benefitted from reviews by games journalists that considered the tastes of the game's intended audience

AS DEVELOPERS, we all like to bemoan the odd game review from time to time – because games are close to our hearts, and increasingly our wallets both in terms of sales and Metacritic-based incentives.

Most reviews are targeted at what are often called 'core' gamers; people like us that follow games avidly, and are very experienced at playing them. Most reviewers and developers fall into this camp themselves, as do the readerships of most gaming websites and print press. And so, entirely reasonably, those reviewers aim their reviews accordingly.

A problem starts to occur when the audiences' tastes differ significantly from the reviewer's – or developer's – own tastes. This is becoming more of an issue as our industry matures to include a great many people outside this group – particularly so if the group targeted is not just this 'core'. I have in mind games like *Animal Crossing*, *Nintendogs*, *RollerCoaster Tycoon* – all huge sellers, but with noticeably lower reviews than their quality suggests.

The presumption is 'it wasn't aimed at me, and so it must be bad'. This attitude makes sense if the audience for the review is effectively the same as the reviewer themselves, but for a review on TV, on a website for kids and adults, or in the mainstream media, it does not. Just as it is difficult to develop games for a different audience, it is difficult to review them too.

KINECTIMAL MAGNETISM

The overall effect – particularly for those games that don't include this 'core' in their audience, is about 10 per cent of the review points. It is not something to cry about – just something to be borne in mind.

I have been delighted by the mature response by the games press over *Kinectimals*, for example. Almost without fail they have pointed out that the game is targeted at kids – as it was – and have reviewed it with that in mind – like the excellent 'Meet Dave' piece in *Joystiq* by Justin McElroy, for example, and the astonishingly cute review by a six year old on wearearcade.com, which gave it 100/10.

> ***"A problem starts to occur when the audiences' tastes differ significantly from the reviewer's – or developer's – own tastes."***

There are always the occasional outliers, either through a genuine difference of opinion, or for some other reason. *Kinectimals* got a couple of shockers, but as developers we have to take these things on the chin.

KNOW THE SCORE

In these connected times, Achievements or Trophies have been a curse for the small minority of hurried or irresponsible reviewers if their online ID is known. Occasionally someone is caught out, or accused of being unreasonable. For example, there was the hoo-hah over the reviews of *Space Giraffe* and *Kane and Lynch* and the alleged connection to the firing of Jeff Gerstmann.

Most reviewers are excellent at what they do, and it is a very hard job with, frankly, little glory. As an industry, there is something we could do to recognise this – effectively a Metacritic for reviewers. The best reviewers give spot-on reviews pretty soon after a game is released. They do not wait to see what others say, but nevertheless consistently come very close to the final average score. There could be a prize for the best each year. Don't forget – this is not intended to influence reviews – just to encourage and reward consistency – as it is not a high reviewer that gets the reward, it is the one that gets the best result.

This method could also be used for non-'core' games, too, with the benchmark being either eventual sales, or eventual average user reviews, as at the moment it is a real lottery for customers buying games for their younger kids – with few trustworthy reviews – which is one of the reasons, I think, so many shovel-ware games sneak under the radar in this sector.

If there were a system that tracked reviews by reviewer, not by publication, then hopefully this could reinforce the position of 'star' reviewers in particular sectors, which I think would be a very good thing for all concerned.

David Braben is the founder of Cambridge-based Frontier Developments. Best known as the co-creator of *Elite*, Braben has contributed to, designed or overseen a number of other projects including *Frontier: Elite II*, *Dog's Life*, *Thrillville*, *LostWinds* and *Kinectimals*. Frontier is currently developing his next title, *The Outsider*. He is also closely involved with Skillset.
www.frontier.co.uk

10 years
of loving what we do

January 2011 marks the tenth birthday of the UK games industry's best-kept secret.

Throughout the last decade, we've entertained millions of gamers the world over. And with several new games in production, we have millions more in mind. Whether you're an artist, designer or developer, isn't it time you discovered Jagex Games Studio?

jagex.com/careers

love what you do

//COMMENT: LAW

An unfair advantage

by **Tatiana Kruse**, Salans

Right: Developers would do well to examine Asda's run-in with Specsavers

THIS MONTH'S article reports on a recent case concerning trademark infringement.

Games developers should be very, very wary of using other people's trade marks in their games and should be alert to what others are doing with their marks. The case is not a games case – fortunately, those are rare – but the principles will be relevant.

It is an infringement of a UK registered trade mark and a Community Trade Mark (registered at the EU registry in respect of all EU states), in the course of trade and without the owner's consent, to – among other things – use an identical or similar mark in relation to goods or services, where the owner of the registered mark has a reputation in that country and use of the second mark without due cause takes unfair advantage of, or is detrimental to, the distinctive character or repute of the registered mark.

THE FORM OF FUNCTION

Only use which adversely affects the functions of a mark is infringement; merely descriptive use, for example, is not.

The European Court of Justice decided in the L'Oréal v Bellure case what amounts to unfair advantage. In that case, the question was whether a start-up took advantage of a celebrity.

> ***"Games developers should be very, very wary of using other people's trade marks, and should be alert to what others are doing with their marks."***

The perfume case decision has now been applied in a case concerning two well-established players, Specsavers International Healthcare Ltd & Ors v Asda Stores Ltd (2010).

Specsavers registered Specsaver as a Community Trade Mark in words and in logo forms. Asda then re-launched its optical business under the strapline "Be a real spec saver at Asda".

The court summarised what was required to demonstrate unfair advantage: "a link between the offending sign, in the sense of calling the registered mark to mind; that an advantage is gained thereby; and that the advantage in unfair".

The link need not be economic. The unfair advantage would be the consequence of similarity between the two marks, by virtue of which the public makes the connection.

The court found that the whole point of the play on words in Asda's slogan was to call to mind the Specsaver mark.

BECAUSE YOU'RE WORTH IT

The court then applied the guidance in from L'Oréal v Bellure. It said that unfair advantage must be assessed globally, taking into account all relevant circumstances; the advantage will be unfair if the use amounts to riding on the coat-tails of the mark (use of the mark and its inbuilt reputation to create or enhance the reputation of the infringing product); and it is relevant that the offending mark was created deliberately to create the link with the registered mark.

Asda's slogan was not merely referencing Specsavers' reputation for value, but also that reputation as established by the brand. According to the courts: "The unfair use was in commandeering part of the reputation of the Specsavers brand with a view to affixing the qualities of one's own and then being better still."

The court found that there could be unfair advantage, even though there was comparison – this was not a case of mere, straight comparative advertising (which is permitted).

So, be cautious and be fair before using someone else's mark and reputation.

Tatiana Kruse, of international law firm Salans LLP, is specialised in IP and IT law and has a particular interest computer games. She can be contacted on +44 (0)20 7509 6134.
tkruse@salans.com

want magic.
get mana.

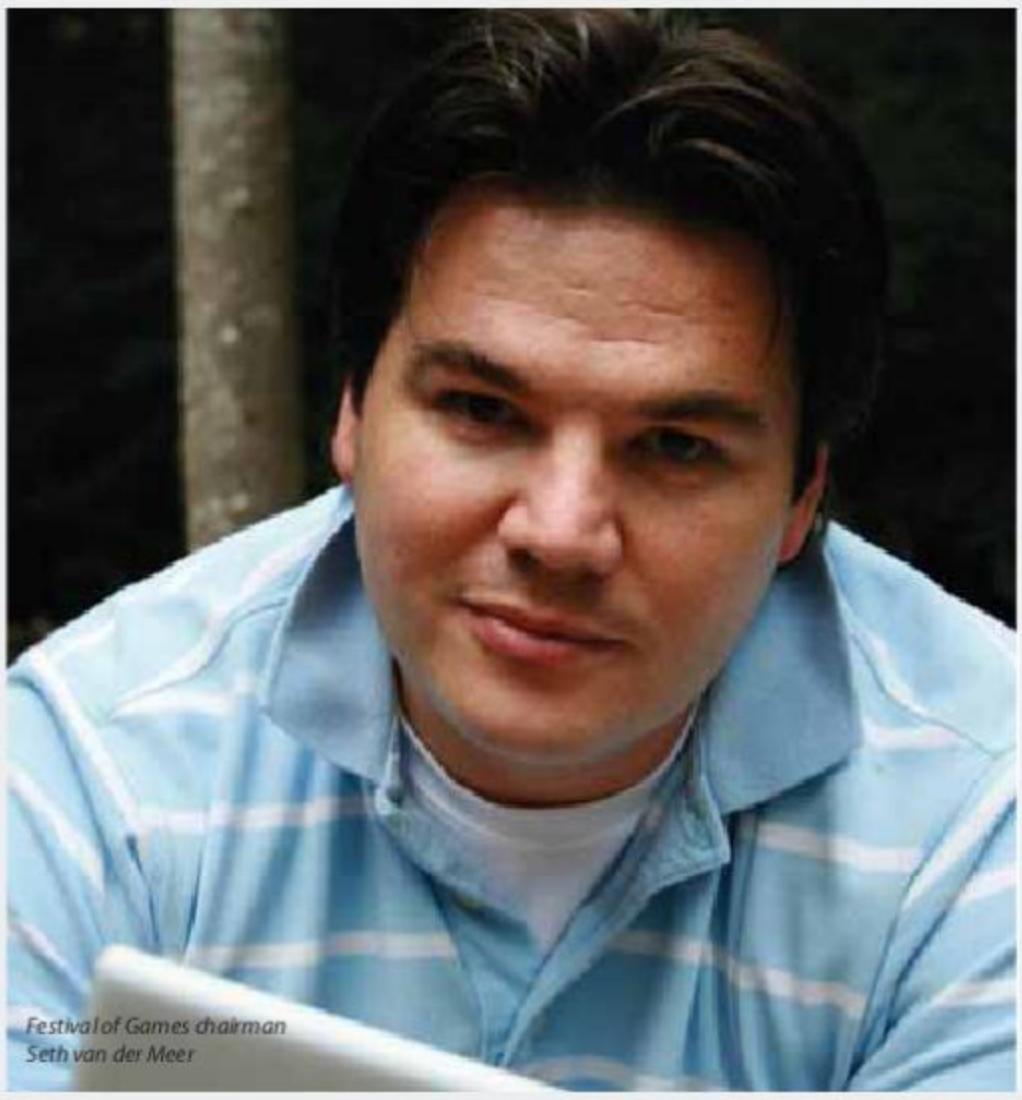
voice recording specialists

casting
directing
recording
post production
script editing
localisation

credits include Wii Fit, BioShock 2 and Pokémon Battle Revolution

+44 (0)1869 343 488
info@manasound.com
manasound.com

mana
SOUND


Festival of Games chairman Seth van der Meer

THE DUTCH CONNECTION

A close-up look at the Festival of Games annual industry conference and pitching event

IN 2005 A MEETING of video games industry professionals took place in Utrecht in the Netherlands with the intention of sharing local knowledge and expertise for the benefit of the national sector as a whole.

Over the following half-decade this event has rapidly evolved into an annual conference organised by the newly-founded NLGD and aimed at an international audience.

Now known as the Festival of Games, the gathering last year saw over 2,000 attendees pass through its doors. The event's chairman, Seth van der Meer, has a clear idea of how this relatively quick acceleration in size was possible.

"The secret lies in the combination of people, content and business," van der Meer (*left*) explains.

"Over the years we have consistently shown that we are able to sense the market and respond with good content at our conference and on our show floor. The team behind the event is constantly in touch with key people in the industry to get personal insights and feedback. This has allowed us to get speakers like Toru Iwatani, Ralph Baer, Dave Perry and Kellee Santiago, among others, to come and share their experience and vision at the festival."

Van der Meer also describes the festival's 'Pitch and Match' events as

THE MONTH AHEAD

A look at what February has in store for the industry and beyond…

FEBRUARY 1ST

Ace Combat: Assault Horizon is released. Highly plausible conflict situations are played out in top arcade-style flight-sim fashion.

FEBRUARY 2ND

Groundhog Day In North America they'll be asking a rodent to predict the future. Everyone else can just watch the Bill Murray film.

FEBRUARY 8TH

Eden games' **Test Drive Unlimited 2** will come doughnuting onto a console near you. For real this time.

FEBRUARY 8TH

casual connect

The three-day **Casual Connect** conference kicks off in Hamburg, Germany, bringing the casual and social games industry together.

FEBRUARY 14TH

St. Valentine's Day Quite possibly the worst day of the year. Hell if you're not in a relationship. Even worse if you are. Enjoy.

FEBRUARY 15TH

Marvel vs. Capcom 3: Fate of Two Worlds is released. Expunge those post-Valentine's Day blues by beating the living hell out of Captain America. The bloody goody-two-shoes.

FEBRUARY 15TH

Canadian Flag Day as if an excuse to wave a red leaf around were ever really needed.

FEBRUARY 19TH

The two-day **Midlands MCM Expo** begins at the Telford International Centre, UK. Exhibitors at past events include EA, Tecmo Koei, Konami and South Peak.

ICC Cricket World Cup 2011

FEBRUARY 19TH

The popular **2011 Cricket World Cup** begins as New Zealand face off against Kenya at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in India.

FEBRUARY 22ND

Killzone 3 is released. Guerilla Games' epic sci-fi saga rumbles on, and continues to look suspiciously like World War Two in space.

FEBRUARY 28TH

GDC 2011 begins. Now on its 25th iteration, the San Francisco mega-event has come a long way from its living room beginnings way back in 1988.

proving massively important to its ongoing growth.

"It turned out to be a real hit and the main reason many of our guests come to the Netherlands to do business," he says.

"Pitch and Match is a unique matchmaking concept whereby our personal matchmakers hook developers up with publishers or investors, and the other way around. Most companies can only afford events like us if there is real business value and last year almost 200 companies did their business at the Festival of Games."

There have been ups and downs over the short course of the event's development as well.

"One of the most difficult things building up the Festival of Games was to get the right combination of events, people and companies. The Festival of Games centres around a supply and demand business model. You need good speakers and buyers to attract visitors, but you need visitors to attract game publishers and keynote speakers. This has been very tricky and we lost some sleep over it," says Van der Meer.

"But since the start we have had a group of loyal supporters that helped us gain credibility and that kept coming back. We believe in a personal approach, since most business deals are still done by people. Getting the right decision makers to our Festival of Games has been a priority since day one. By helping them to do their business, we got loyalty in return."

As for the future, Van der Meer has high hopes that the Festival of Games will retain a relevant position by keeping its content essential.

"Our event will need to keep up with all the trends, but not get lost in the process. One of the things I think is needed is business knowledge for developer-cum-publishers. They enter a whole new ball game. In the end even the games industry is just another industry and therefore it demands valuable knowledge from events such as ours."

www.festivalofgames.nl

DEVELOP DIARY

Your complete calendar for developer events in the months ahead…

GDC
February 28th to March 4th
San Francisco, US
www.gdconf.com

How quickly a year passes. Slightly earlier than is traditional, GDC is back. It's the 25th year of the show, and it promises to be bigger – and subsequently more exhausting – than ever before.

Nintendo president Satoru Iwata is set to keynote, and will be joined by the development sector's global elite in tracks covering design, audio, business and funding, monetisation, programming and a wealth of other topics.

And of course there'll be all the handshaking and business card collecting that makes attending the event worth every penny. Just remember to book a hotel room as soon as you can.

JANUARY 2011

MOBILE GAMES FORUM 2011
January 26th to 27th
London, UK
www.mobilegamesforum.co.uk

GLOBAL GAME JAM
January 28th to 30th
Everywhere
www.globalgamejam.org

WORLD OF LOVE 2
January 28th
London, UK
www.indiegamesarcade.com/world-of-love

FEBRUARY 2011

D.I.C.E. SUMMIT
February 9th to 11th
Las Vegas, US
www.dicesummit.org

CASUAL CONNECT
February 8th to 10th
Hamburg, Germany
europe.casualconnect.org

GDC
February 28th to March 4th
San Francisco, US
www.gdconf.com

MARCH 2011

GAMES FLEADH 2011
March 9th to 10th
Tipperary Institute, Ireland
www.gamesfleadh.ie

APRIL 2011

FESTIVAL OF GAMES 2011
April 28th to 29th
Utrecht, The Netherlands
www.festivalofgames.org

MAY 2011

NORDIC GAME 2011
May 10th to 13th
Malmo, Sweden
www.nordicgame.com

CANADIAN GAMES CONFERENCE
May 19th to 20th
Vancouver, Canada
canadiangamesconference.com

JUNE 2011

E3 EXPO 2011
June 7th to 9th
Los Angeles, US
www.e3expo.com

JUNE 2011

MCV GAMESFIVES
July 1st
London, UK
www.gamesfives360.co.uk

DEVELOP CONFERENCE
July 19th to 21st
Brighton, UK
www.develop-conference.com

DEVELOP AWARDS
July 20th
Brighton, UK
www.develop-online.net

SPLASH DAMAGE IS LOOKING FOR REINFORCEMENTS ACROSS ALL DISCIPLINES

INTERESTED? JOIN UP AT
WWW.SPLASHDAMAGE.COM/CAREERS

splash damage

STALK US ON THE INTERNET

FOLLOW @SPLASHDAMAGE

LIKE FACEBOOK.COM/SPLASHDAMAGE

develop WINNER
BEST INDEPENDENT STUDIO (2008)

WOLFENSTEIN: ENEMY TERRITORY (PC)

- 16 million downloads
- Half a billion matches played
- 7 Game of the Year awards
- BAFTA-nominated
- 90 Metacritic score

2003

ENEMY TERRITORY: QUAKE WARS (PC)

- 96 awards & nominations including 34 Editor's Choice and the Game Critics "Best Multiplayer of E3" award
- 84 Metacritic score

2007

BRINK (XBOX 360, PLAYSTATION 3, PC)

- 80 awards & nominations so far
- One of 2011's most anticipated original titles
- Coming Spring 2011

2011

BETA

DEVELOPMENT FEATURES, INTERVIEWS, ESSAYS & MORE

"Personal networking has always been one of the most effective channels for job seekers."
Peter Leonard, Amiqus, p33

How Sony's Home has thrived
p39

The Creative Assembly talks Shogun 2
p43

Develop's industry-wide salary survey
p37

Want a great job like this lot?

Our recruitment special has you covered. Starts on page 22

Best of the **best**

They have the most impressive games careers – but how did they do it? Here, **Develop** names the top 16 games developers in the UK, and key faces provide advice on how you can get a job just like theirs…

MICHAEL ACTON SMITH
MOSHI MONSTERS

MICHAEL ACTON SMITH is another of the new breed of games dev leader whose career didn't begin in interactive but is still leading the sector in new, exciting directions. After co-founding online store Firebox.com, he courted investors to fund his new company Mind Candy and its ambitious new alternative reality game, *Perplexcity*. The game sold dedicated puzzle cards through retailers (including Firebox, natch) leading players to a cash-filled cube hidden in the real world. Yet it was the demise of this project that led to his inspiration moment. With cash running out and backers getting impatient, he quickly invested remaining funds in *Moshi Monsters*, an online puzzle world for children. 30m users and a recently-launched merchandise push later, and Mind Candy is soaring, and leading the way for online-focused UK studios.

> ***Think big. Don't assume you can't publish a game yourself, or you can't raise investment, or you can't hire a team, or you can't build a studio, or you can't generate significant revenue from your game.***
>
> ***The games industry is going through massive change so this is the perfect time to be entrepreneurial and seize new opportunities.***
>
> ***Don't just dip your toe in the water, dive in headfirst and start splashing around - you'll be amazed at what you can do.***
>
> ***If you get a chance read 'The Magic of Thinking Big' by David Schwartz – it was one of the books that inspired me to become an entrepreneur.***

TORSTEN REIL
NATURALMOTION

REIL CO-FOUNDED animation tech firm NaturalMotion in 2001, spun-off from Oxford University. The result was a great example of where education and industry can work together, and ultimately create some of the best commercial technology on the market. The technology - available as a bespoke engine Euphoria or the more off-the-shelf Morpheme - has been used in games as diverse as *Metal Gear Solid* and *GTA IV*. But now, the firm is more than a middleware outlet. Reil drove an expansion to in-house development in 2007, which turned the american footballers from its demo reels into a real game, *Backbreaker*. The game actually first debuted on iPhone before a big-budget console version eventually hit consoles. Now, NaturalMotion runs its own games and publishing division.

> ***Build a management team you can trust.***
>
> ***Listen to staff, and communicate.***
>
> ***Control cost.***
>
> ***Be prepared to walk away from any deal.***
>
> ***Think big.***

KRISTIAN SEGERSTRALE
PLAYFISH

HE IS only just 33, but Segerstrale has overseen one of the UK's biggest ever developer acquisitions – Playfish's purchase by EA for $275m, second only to Microsoft's Rare money-grab back in 2002. Proof that Segerstrale is one of the most inspirational UK developer execs? Definitely - Playfish was the second time he formed and sold a studio, to boot, the first being mobile outfit Macrospace. Under his guidance, Playfish has pioneered and established business models that incumbents are still trying to figure out.

IAN LIVINGSTONE
SQUARE ENIX

ANOTHER LUMINARY that needs little introduction. Livingstone is widely credited as the 'godfather of Lara Croft' – but his whorl has gone far beyond *Tomb Raider*, as he has been a guiding force for a range of latterly Eidos and now Square Enix titles. As life president his influence stretches far, perhaps most importantly today into games education. He's a key advisor to Skillset, and most recently spearheaded the Livingstone-Hope review which promises to finally crack the frustrating conundrums around how colleges and universities prepare the developers of tomorrow.

NINA KRISTENSEN
NINJA THEORY

AS ONE of the trio that formed Cambridge-based Ninja Theory (formerly Just Add Minsters) with Jez San, Kristensen is a great example of entrepreneurial and ambitious spirit amongst core UK games developers. Ninja Theory has never wavered in its ambitious to deliver high-end games content, as proven by action games *Heavenly Sword*, *Enslaved* and its upcoming take on *Devil May Cry*. Nina the team have also aggressively pushed hard for a cross-over between games and film, using a long-running relationship with actor Andy Serkis to open doors and innovate creatively.

> ***"Know what you want, work extremely hard to achieve it and know exactly how much you are willing to risk."***

ALICE TAYLOR
MAKIEWORLD

TAYLOR HAS led a transformation in UK games development in a number of ways, predominantly through three years as commissioning editor at Channel 4 Education. There, she refocused much of its budget not on TV projects, but interactive ones, commissioning games from a raft of indies that tackled challenging subjects like STDs, body image and social rights. It's been a serious investment that hasn't just thrown commercial lifelines to smaller teams, but has helped underline the power of games among young audiences. She's since founded a start-up, Makieworld, which she says mixes 3D printing of dolls with play elements.

> ***"Best advice: Be nice to people. Be the change you wish to see in the world: you might not succeed in some cases, but you'll never regret having tried. Don't feed the trolls.***
>
> ***All are harder to do in practice than they seem on paper.***
>
> ***If you're forming a studio, don't seat-of-pants it: if you're going to be employing people, you have serious responsibilities: educate yourself, read the small print, beware cash flow."***

PAULINA BOZEK
INENSU

BOZEK IS best known as the former exec producer of *SingStar*. She help to build a pioneering franchise for Sony from a single game into a huge multi-SKU business built around the core strengths of PlayStation; mass-market fun, multiplayer excellence and now DLC through PlayStation Network. She hasn't rested on her laurels, however. After a short spell building a London studio for Atari, Bozek formed her own independent team, Inensu, which she is co-founder and director. The start-up is making social games for web and mobile, pursuing unique avenues untouched by games – a social music title and a fashion-oriented project for C4 already in the pipeline.

> ***"The secret is to love your job, then you will constantly try to improve what you do and it will be fun. The most important thing is to* do things. *Don't be afraid to ask questions. Go out of your comfort zone safe in the knowledge that you have the capacity to learn and tackle whatever you need to."***

LESLIE BENZIES
ROCKSTAR GAMES

HIS PROFILE is relatively low, but at Rockstar he is one of the most influential creatives, sharing top-billing on key games with founders Sam and Dan Houser. Benzies started as a bedroom coder, cherrypicked for a job at DMA Design by *GTA* creator Dave Jones, and eventually leading the team that not only completed *GTA*, but fought for studio independence from a meddling publisher. Those two things effectively set the Rockstar ethos – creating confident, uncompromised games with laser-focused vision. Most recently Benzies took a senior role overseeing *Red Dead Redemption*, mainly developed at Rockstar's San Diego studio – which proves his leadership style can be exported, and isn't just limited to the developer/publisher's Scottish base.

MARK GERHARD
JAGEX

GERHARD RUNS the UK's biggest independent studio, overseeing one of the world's most-played free MMOs. But his his career trajectory actually saw him start out in core computer software businesses, proving that when the games industry taps into other fields, it's not just for filler staff. He worked as security consultant and IT expert for banks and the likes of Ministry of Data before becoming CTO of Jagex in 2008. He took the CEO chair a year later and hasn't been afraid to slaughter a few sacred cows, too – he famously pulled the plug on the firm's long-in-gestation *MechScape* MMO because it wasn't up to scratch.

CHRIS LEE
ACTIVISION

THE CO-FOUNDER of FreeStyleGames and Media Molecule now has one of the most important games dev roles at Activision, where his is VP of European studios. Lee started out in sales and marketing for middleware firm Criterion, where he ran key parts its global Renderware business for over five years. After acquirer EA wound up the software, Lee went solo with FreeStyle – he later helped a band of ex-Lionhead developers strike out on their own to form an indie called Media Molecule, and land a publishing deal for a then-unknown platformer starring a boy made of sack-cloth.

"Students: Don't rush or take short-cuts – take the time to get a fully rounded education and applicable qualifications before focusing on games. Don't jump straight into a half baked 'video game design' course at 16 or 18 – it's not a short-cut to recruitment into the games industry. You don't need a degree, and places like Escape Studios are excellent. Just spend time learning and mastering a craft.

If you're starting your own studio – double the number you currently have in your cost and overheads line for the first two years and make sure the business can still survive. You will spend twice what you expect in setting up the business.

Publishing contracts are always a month further away from being signed than you think. And if a publisher hasn't green-lit your concept/pitch within a month they're not going to."

PHIL HARRISON
LONDON VENTURE PARTNERS

JUST IN case you don't know, Phil Harrison is a bona fide games industry luminary. He started out as a game designer and graphic artist, he made the leap to management as head of development for Mindscape in the late '80s, moving to Sony as the firm began work on its first games console. Harrison's star ascended in line with PlayStation, culminating in an role leading Sony Worldwide Studios. He championed and signed key first-party projects including the likes of *LittleBigPlanet* and *SingStar*. He left to play a part in the restructuring of Atari, before setting up London Venture Partners, a new investment group for disruptive game tech.

"Invest in yourself and your future career: go to conferences, take advantage of student discounts, network and meet people.

Be confident: identify people you want to connect with, and reach out to them. Some will be too busy – but, hopefully, some will help. Business networks like LinkedIn are better than Facebook in this regard.

Subscribe to every news group you can and read every news site, every day. You can learn a lot from news about the people, the process and the fabric of the industry. This knowledge will prove invaluable.

If you're going to form a studio, hand-pick your leadership team and divide up the responsibilities. You cannot be excellent at everything, even if that comes as a shock to some people, so share the load.

When you're building your first product, schedule the point at which you will abandon a bad idea. Failure is good if it's done cheaply and quickly.

When building a company in the industry today, your first decision is your metrics and analytics tools strategy. You will make better, faster and cheaper product decisions as a result.

Find a mentor – someone you are not related to, and not an immediate manager, for advice in good times and bad."

MARGARET ROBERTSON
HIDE&SEEK

ORIGINALLY AN historian, Robertson has had a varied and respected career in games that has taken her from journalist to development director via consultancy work. In games she started as a freelance writer, before scoring a role on *Edge* and swiftly ascended to become its editor. She left to become a consultant, working on projects of all sizes, including some of the games commissioned by Channel 4. Most recently she joined Hide&Seek, a game design studio which uses public spaces and digital platforms to make 'interesting games for interesting people'.

MILES JACOBSON
SPORTS INTERACTIVE

WHAT BETTER proof of Jacobson's stature in the UK industry than his recent OBE? Jacobson has run Sports Interactive for ten years, overseeing its continued growth and dominance of the soccer management genre. He's also hugely active with key charities and a proud supporter of Watford FC. Most impressive has been the way his studio has been virtually unharmed by the regular shifts in the PC games market, while also confidently trying new things – the studio's latest push has been onto iPhone with commercially powerful handheld versions of *FM*.

JON BURTON
TRAVELLER'S TALES

AS HEAD and co-founder of Traveller's Tales, Burton has one of the most enviable studio boss roles in the UK. He started the studio in 1989 with just one member of staff. But It was a partnership and eventual merger with LEGO game rights holder Giant Interactive 15 years later that saw him and his company solidify its place in the games elite. From *LEGO Star Wars* onwards, TT has set the bar high in creating credible games for all audiences that may be based on big brands, but have big hearts too.

"The way for a studio to be successful is for the individual who has the vision to be empowered by every other department.

In my experience, every successful studio has one individual who has the gut feeling for the game, and have been allowed to execute that vision.

Every game I've seen get in trouble, from many different studios, tends to be down to more than one person calling the shots – that includes the publisher.

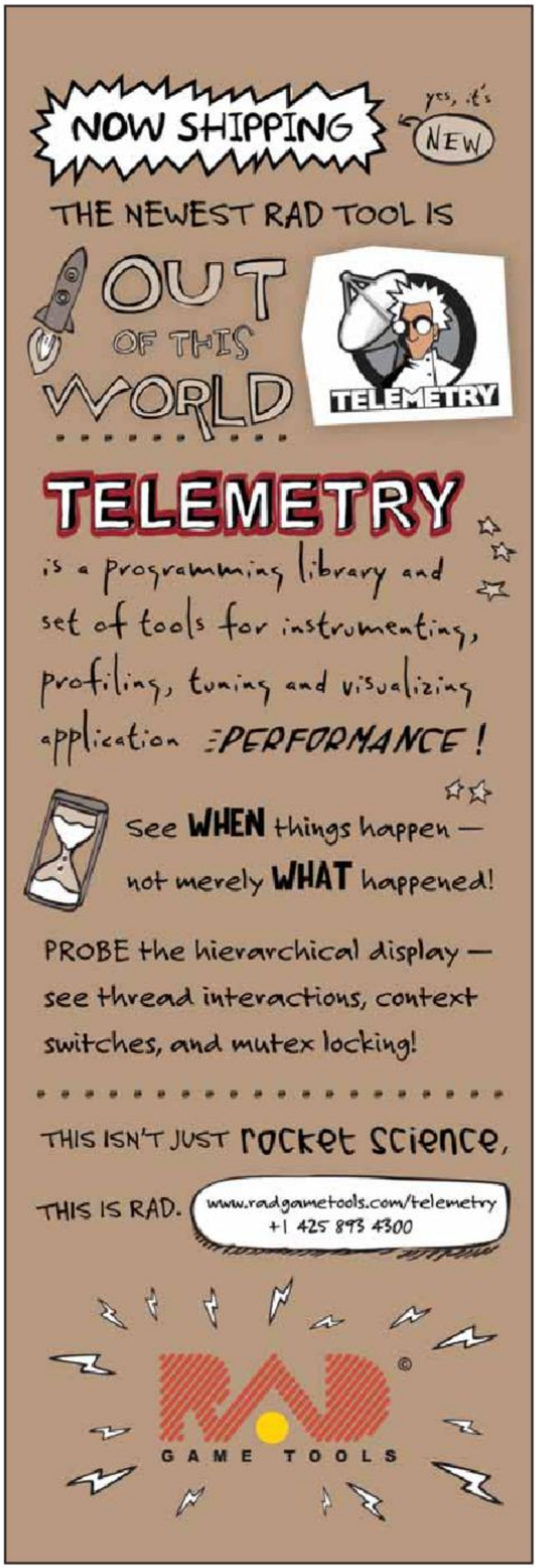
Lastly, I can only make the games that I would want to play. I can't execute someone else's vision; only my own."

SIOBHAN REDDY
MEDIA MOLECULE

WHILE MUCH of the attention for Media Molecule goes to its founder members, it is Reddy whose work ethos and talent impresses most. She started working in games at 18, after moving to the UK from Australia. Her first UK games dev job was on *DiscWorld Noir* as production assistant, but by 1999 she was a producer at Criterion, looking after *Airblade*, then powerhouse releases *Burnout 3* and *4*. She joined Media Molecule as producer on *LittleBigPlanet* in 2006 when the studio was founded and has now moved up to the role of studio director.

CHARLES CECIL
REVOLUTION SOFTWARE

CECIL IS still the only person in the entire games industry that has actually taken the Hollywood model and made it work for games. Effectively a games auteur, Cecil works with key publishers and developer to spearhead projects in a role that is a mix of director and producer. His slate of owned IP *Broken Sword* and *Beneath a Steel Sky* was recently rereleased for iPhone, but most impressively he looked after the recent *Doctor Who: The Adventure Games* episodic titles, helping build a meaningful bridge between TV and games content for the first time.


NOW SHIPPING
yes, it's NEW
THE NEWEST RAD TOOL IS
OUT OF THIS WORLD
TELEMETRY
TELEMETRY
is a programming library and set of tools for instrumenting, profiling, tuning and visualizing application :PERFORMANCE!
See WHEN things happen — not merely WHAT happened!
PROBE the hierarchical display — see thread interactions, context switches, and mutex locking!
THIS ISN'T JUST rocket science,
THIS IS RAD.
www.radgametools.com/telemetry
+1 425 893 4300
GAME TOOLS

JOIN THE REBELLION!

WE NEED PROGRAMMERS, DESIGNERS, ARTISTS AND PRODUCERS FOR PROJECTS AT OUR OXFORD STUDIO.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
REBELLION.CO.UK/JOBS

REBELLION®

MSc Games Programming
Hardcore Games Programming, Physics and AI
Your fast track to a job as a games programmer
www.MScGames.com
"The course is rigorous and demanding, but in the end worth the hard work. I got two job offers from leading companies in the games industry within a month of completing my course. The best part is that I didn't really have to struggle to get them." Hussain Sheikh 2006 MSc
For more quotes from ex-students, examples of student work and syllabus information please visit www.mscgames.com.
PhD and BSc study also available.
Image courtesy of Codemasters. All rights reserved.
THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Avatar Games Recruitment is a specialist recruitment consultancy that provides staffing solutions for businesses within the Games Industry.

Avatar has extensive and exclusive relationships with some of the best developers and publishers around the globe, making it perfect sense to choose Avatar for your next career move or hiring requirement.

Here is a current selection of some of our hottest opportunities:

- **Development Director's**
  Negotiable
- **Audio Directors**
  £45k - £65k + Benefits + Bonus
- **Art Manager/Director**
  £40k - £80k + Benefits + Bonus
- **Lead Game Designers**
  £40k - £60k + Benefits + Bonus
- **Experienced/Senior Programmers**
  £25k - £65k + Benefits + Bonus
- **Experienced/Senior Artists**
  £22k - £50k + Benefits + Bonus
- **Senior/Executive Producers**
  £38k - £85k + Benefits + Bonus
- **Creative Directors**
  Up to £80k + Attractive Packages

Avatar have close to 1000 Opportunities around the world, these include USA, Canada, Europe, UK, Japan, China, Singapore, and many more.

For more information about other positions we have feel free to contact us:

www.avatar-games.co.uk
enquiries@avatar-games.co.uk

GAMES RECRUITMENT
avatar

Inside jobs

Will Freeman looks at employment in the games industry, and speaks to studios, technology companies, educators and recruitment agencies about how best to source talent, find work and expand your business' headcount

Clive Robert (left) a director at Train2Game, and Felix Roeken, general manager of middleware specialist Trinigy

WITH THE long shadow of the economic crisis still stretching over games, and studio closures an all too familiar sight, it's certainly an intimidating time to look for a new job or hire new talent.

The good news is that most in the know forecast that 2011 will be a good year for job hunting, with many predicting that the number of vacancies will climb as studios expand and restructure.

While the UK market is still nervous after the recent spate of high profile studio closures, on the global stage opportunities continue to be in plentiful supply. In particular those with a wealth of experience who are prepared to tackle either travelling or relocating should find a number of suitable roles available to them further afield.

"We've seen incredible increases in vacancies in all areas of business," says Kim Adcock, managing director of OPM Recruitment, who takes a pragmatic view of the current jobs space. "There still seems to be some nervousness about committing to hires though, especially at the higher level. There are still more candidates on the market due to recent redundancies, so the market is very competitive."

> ***"We've seen incredible increases in vacancies in all areas."***
>
> Kim Adcock, OPM

Another specialist agency, Avatar Games Recruitment, is particularly optimistic, and sees the number of vacancies increasing over the next 12 months. "2010 was a big improvement on the previous year and this trend should carry on," states managing director Eamonn Mgherbi, who, having considered feedback from a number of his clients, has concluded that the next three years will see very encouraging developments affecting those looking for work in the coming three years.

CRISIS AVERTED?

Overall, there's a consensus that as games companies are inching free from the recession they will be looking to make more hires in 2011. And yet an atmosphere of cautious optimism prevails.

"We feel that whilst there will not be a significant jump in vacancies, there will always be the need for talented development staff who can make good things happen, and the demand for contract staff will increase," suggests Stig Strand, head of games recruitment team at Amiqus.

It's certainly not going to be easy for those hoping to secure entry-level positions, thanks to the continued fallout from the global recession.

"I think new candidates coming out of school face increasing pressure from experienced candidates who might have been laid off in the recent months or years," proposes Felix Roekin, general manager of middleware outfit Trinigy.

"It's difficult for those new candidates because they don't necessarily have the skill set that their experienced counterparts do. Conversely, some of those experienced developers are now starting up studios of their own, which provides a great new market for the right candidates."

Roeken has hit on a key point that may be of great encouragement to those intimidated by today's job market. As microstudios become midistudios and social and digital gaming continues to rise, there are a wealth of new avenues opening.

"With the surge in popularity of social and online gaming the number of vacancies will certainly increase," confirms Noel Krohn, business development director at recruiter MPG Universal. "Larger budgeted triple-A titles and new technology create the need for larger teams or very specific skill set requirements that open up new positions."

ROOM TO GROW

Speaking to those in studios proactively recruiting, it's clear an appetite for expansion prevails. Creative Assembly's *Total War* team has grown consistently in recent years, retaining key staff while

HOW TO GET THAT JOB

WHETHER YOU'RE an entry level post-graduate about to apply for your first job, or an industry veteran with a career change in mind, then there's plenty of ways to better your chances. *Develop* has approached some of the leading talent sourcing experts for their top tips on improving your chances.

■ **Emma Cole, operations and HR assistant, Creative Assembly:** "We see hundreds of CVs but the ones that stand out are where we can see that the person is not just looking for a job, but they are chasing a career and have a love of games. You can clearly see the ones who have put additional work and effort into their portfolio."

■ **Stig Strand, head of games recruitment team, Amiqus:** "To stand out from the crowd showreels need to be creative and unique containing your best work only."

■ **Cortney Endecott, talent manager, Crytek:** "Have something to show for. Many potential candidates have the education and the drive but are lacking anything to show for it. Spend more time on portfolios, mods, coding skills and keep up to date on current developments and trends."

■ **Peter Lovell, talent acquisition specialist, Jagex:** "Specialise; particularly if you're a junior or graduate. So if you want to be an animator, devote your time to this speciality – don't make the mistake of dividing your time up between animation, modelling and level design."

■ **Clive Robert, director, Train2Game:** "Understand the games industry, the disciplines within it and where you best fit. Don't get blinded by the desire to work on games, it's a career not a hobby. Once you understand a little about the industry and where you best fit make sure you have identified the best possible course for you; gone are the days of entering QA with no experience and working your way up."

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Designers with social integration skills are in demand, says Jagex's Peter Lovell

IN SPITE of the high profile closures and lay offs at triple-A studios the world over, data held by Amiqus suggests that within the emerging gaming and digital sectors there has been a 25 per cent increase in the number of new games job openings since 2009. And Amiqus isn't alone. Everywhere studios and agencies are highlighting areas where positions are abundant. So what positions should you be considering for your next job?

■ **Julien Hofer, founder, Datascope:** "Good candidates are scarce for programmers, technical artists, senior sound designers and online games developers."

■ **Kim Adcock, managing director, OPM:** "There is a scarcity of programming candidates at senior and lead level, but it's been like that since I joined the industry in 1992. There is also a shortage of knowledgeable online marketing people due to demand rather than supply."

■ **Ian Goodall, director, Aardvark Swift:** "Experienced, skilled coders are always in short supply. Technical artists are as rare as Rocking horse shit too."

■ **Peter Lovell, talent acquisition specialist, Jagex:** "There is still a lack of lead design candidates with real experience of or passion for social integration within the game design. This is a relatively new field though, so will likely grow as more become exposed to it during their formative design years."

welcoming many new team members to the fold.

"General attrition has been really low, but we have been lucky enough to still be able to add to the team by hiring programmers, artists, designers and animators during the course of this year as well," says Emma Cole, The Creative Assembly's operations and HR assistant.

Craig Duncan is development director at Sumo Digital, another studio undergoing ambitious expansion: "At Sumo we use a number of methods and I think you need a good blend to cover all potential talent bases, we have done expo events such as Develop, which we have seen some success, we use agencies and we recruit directly through direct applications via our website."

Duncan also points out that word of mouth referrals and staff recommendations still bring in a number of new hires. "LinkedIn is also a great tool for sourcing and communicating with potential candidates as well as keeping an eye on company activity," he adds, pointing to the power of social networks to improve traditional recruiting methods (*see page 33*).

Visa restrictions and the immigration cap are a key challenge for UK recruiters, says Creative Assembly's Emma Cole

ON THE UP

Yet whatever the size of your team, increasing studio headcount is never an easy task. It can upset the balance of a creative force, and stretch resource if not handled carefully. So how do studios and tech companies hoping to hire new talent smooth the process?

"One method that has always reaped benefits for our clients is to ensure that you hire a more modest sized team with a larger amount of experience and proven skills in the industry areas that you are looking for, and having this account for about 80-to-85 per cent of your team."

These individuals cost more per head, but they can save costs down the line in terms of development as their experience will ensure higher quality work is producing more efficiently, while remaining places can be filled with relatively youthful candidates.

"With all companies, clear direction and communication are important foundations," adds Andy Campell, founder and CEO of Specialmove, on the subject

THE UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

WHETHER GAME-specific qualifications or traditional degrees better serve to mould ideal recruits for the industry remains a contentious issue.

"A computer science degree always stands out for programmers," says Stig Strand, head of games recruitment team at Amiqus. "A good fine art degree or graphic design degree is also valued for entry level staff. Specific qualifications in games development still do not seem to be as valued as education and more importantly industry experience."

Peter Lovell, talent acquisition specialist at Jagex agrees: "Unfortunately we often find that a great deal of games development graduates fall short of our requirements, especially when it comes to more specialist roles."

Some feel more positive, including Noel Krohn, business development director at MPG Universal: "There are some truly excellent games-specific courses available to students – but as with everything you must do your research before embarking on a three year course."

"As jobs become more pigeon holed more specific skills are needed for each role," suggests OPM's MD Kim Adcock. "Degrees are still important to certain studios; they are looking for more focus on computer science degrees now from the top ten universities. There is no such thing as an all-rounder anymore."

Clive Robert, director at games industry educator Train2Game, recognises the computer games industry needs people who have strong maths, physics and engineering backgrounds. "For me, it's less about whether we have traditional degrees, HNDs, BTEC's and so on, and more about what we teach at primary and secondary school level," he says. "With a strong crop of students who have a good science, technology, maths and english subject background the games industry and many other sectors can rest easy. If however as a country, we do not revert back to the teaching of STEM subjects from an early age, we will continue to lose ground to competing countries.

"As it relates to specific games related teaching, this is more important than ever before. Games development is becoming more and more specialist, and thus the need to teach these specialties is now key. However it's important to know that not all courses are equal or indeed industry relevant. Checking out the courses content and making sure it is relevant is fundamental to any students' future."

"Games degree courses are getting much better in recent years," says Craig Duncan, development director at Sumo Digital: "I have spoken recently to a number of tutors that are running and are helping to evolve the games courses and there are several that have worked in development studios which makes a huge difference."

Vacancies include:

LEAD AUDIO DESIGNER: Birmingham
EXPERIENCED AUDIO DESIGNER: Birmingham
AUDIO PROGRAMMERS: Southam & Birmingham
SENIOR AUDIO DESIGNER: Southam & Birmingham

Be part of the big picture

Recruiting in the UK

Southam [HQ] | Guildford | Birmingham

www.codemasters.com/jobs
twitter.com/codemastersjobs
www.facebook.com/codemastersjobs

codemasters

© 2010 The Codemasters Software Company Limited ("Codemasters"). "Codemasters" ® is a registered trademark owned by Codemasters. The Codemasters logo is a trademark of Codemasters. All Rights Reserved.

of growth. "Once new employees come on board, integration is important, making sure new employees feel welcome and are introduced to existing employees and co-workers."

It is also important not to grow too quickly so as not to upset the inner workings of a studio by introducing team members at a rate which does not allow to see if the new talent fits with the culture of the business.

"It's best to plan a steady and manageable ramp up and ensure the team structure and communication is focused with every addition," suggests Sumo's Duncan.

> ***"It's an increasing problem to identify the really good people."***
> Julien Hofer, Datascope

It's also worth looking beyond traditional talent pools, and turning attention closer to home, says Cortney Endecott, talent manager at middleware giant Crytek: "[One] focus is on our modding community. Crytek has a large fan base of talented individuals, actively working in our modding communities. We regularly hire talent directly from this source. Even our CEO Cevat Yerli, takes the time to look at the newest mods."

Stig Strand, Amiqus

TOUGH TIMES

Whatever techniques a company employs to secure the best staff it can, there are numerous challenges that penetrate the very root of the entire recruitment infrastructure.

"It's an increasing problem to identify the really good people amongst the undifferentiated pool of applicants available via online recruitment or social networking," says Datascope founder Julien Hofer.

And then there's an aforementioned problem, as highlighted by Avatar's Mgherbi. "The most recent challenge that we have faced has been the economic difficulties which has led to the closure of some major studios resulting in mass unemployment, which subsequently leads to an increase in direct applications."

Studios themselves also have their own set of recruitment issues to deal with. The Creative Assembly admits that overcoming the visa restriction and immigration cap on recruiting from outside of the EU has been tough. "We regularly receive applications from fantastically talented candidates from around the world who are interested in building a career in the UK, but we find it very hard, and in some cases impossible, to take on the staff we'd like," reveals the studios's Cole. "It feels as if we're not on the same playing field as our competitors in other countries."

And the *Total War* studio isn't alone, as Peter Lovell, talent acquisition specialist at Jagex confirms: "The cap on immigration has made things a little more difficult for us already as we are struggle to widen our net to attract candidates from outside of the EU."

MPG Universal's Noel Krohn is concerned about high level talent based overseas that is now unable to relocate to the UK

"Home Office restrictions for the UK are having a negative effect at the experienced level, which, says MPG Universal's Krohn, means studios are unable to hire new talent wanting to move to the UK, or worse.

"Importantly, those experienced staff who actually started their career in the UK but who later moved abroad are now unable to relocate back to the UK, which means we are losing a great resource and our graduates could in turn benefit from their experience," Krohn says.

And things are getting tougher for recruitment agencies too. "Internal recruiters are now playing a larger part – picking off talent from floundering and failed studios seems to be their speciality," confirms Aardvark Swift's Ian Goodall, "This inevitably leaves less room for agencies and means we're having to work a great deal harder for less money."

Such challenges are an inevitable part of an evolving games industry, and in reality are a sign of an expanding sector, and will ultimately allow for far more positions in the future. The way games are made is shifting, and this sea change is exactly what will allow a wider range of specifically skilled workers to enter what has traditionally been a difficult sector to penetrate.

"Consider for a moment some of the current best selling and/or groundbreaking games like *Doodle Jump* and *Minecraft*; both are from small, one or two man bands, not from the core games industry, but both are massively successful titles," says Train2Game director Clive Robert. "This would never have been possible five years ago when the industry was obsessed with 100 man teams."

Most agree with Robert. There are many new opportunities, and numerous new ways to source staff. Despite the challenges, the future of the jobs markets looks to be a good one.

GOING IT ALONE

THERE IS another option for job seekers and those looking for a shift in career. You can always set up on your own. Below, some independent thinkers offer their advice on forming your own company.

■ **Paul Croft, head of games, Mediatonic:** "Despite some fantastic indie success stories in the press, average earnings for very small indies on the whole are considerably lower than the average earnings for a professional, employed developer at an established studio. My advice would be if you're going to set up on your own, make sure you're doing it for the love, not for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow."

Paul Croft, Mediatonic

■ **Will Luton, creative director, Mobile Pie:** "The opportunities for small games studios has never been greater. In mobile and social big players are getting entrenched, but small guys like us are still flanking and hitting hard with innovation that's getting noticed. Risk mitigation via a portfolio of contract work and own IP is very important and a lot of great micros have bootstrapped that way."

Will Luton, Mobile Pie

■ **Robin Lacey, managing director, Beatnik:** "I think these things always depend on circumstance – if you have the financial and creative means (along with the drive) you should certainly consider setting up your own studio. However, I think people should be realistic and work out what that could potentially lose by starting up on their own; not just assume they'll shift 100,000 units for £10."

Robin Lacey, Beatnik Games

Numbers are important.

23 years, 13 titles and over 15 million games sold. With 157 staff and growing.

One studio.

The Creative Assembly has been at the leading edge of console and PC games development for a lot longer than most people think.

Now a massive new console project looks set to carry this award winning team into the next decade.

So while numbers are important, we like to celebrate the name too.

www.creative-assembly.com

Console Team:

Senior Designer
Lead Level Designer
Lead Engine Programmer
Senior Graphics Programmer
Graphics Programmer
3D Environment Artist
Senior 3D Environment Artist
Lighting Artist
3D Character Artist
Senior 3D Character Artist
Associate Producer

Total War Team:

Associate Producer
Campaign AI Programmer
Senior Graphics Programmer
Programmer
Game UI Artist

opm jobs.com recruitment
programming
dev management
test and translate
commercial
creative

The Talent to find the Talent

develop Winner 2006
develop WINNER 2008

OPM Response Ltd
Tel: +44(0)1206 21 44 21
www.opmjobs.com

REC Member

Fancy a Move to Canada?...

LONGTAIL STUDIOS

Longtail Studios was formed by Gérard Guillemot, one of the co-founders of Ubisoft Entertainment. Their mission is to create the next generation of character driven video games.

Longtail doesn't want to be the place you punch-in for work; they want to be place you are excited to go every day. The people who work at Longtail are passionate about games. They love playing games, talking about games, and of course, making games.

They are currently embarking on a massive expansion of their Halifax development team as they begin work on a new Playstation Move title!

About Halifax

Halifax, NS is a modern port city teeming with culture and heritage, as well as an impressive array of entertainment, attractions, fine restaurants, colourful gardens and lively nightlife.

Nova Scotia enjoys higher average temperatures than the rest of the surrounding region. This milder climate makes for the perfect conditions for exploring Halifax's charming seaside towns, sun-drenched beaches, and miles of rugged shoreline.

Open Positions Include:

Graphics Programmer
Network Programmer
Gameplay Programmer
Senior 3D Artist
FX Artist
Technical Artist
Lead Game Designer

$Highly competitive packages, plus full relocation and visa support.

To apply or for more detailed job specs please contact **Simon Hope** on the number below or via email: **simon@aswift.com** in the strictest of confidence

Web www.aswift.com Tel +44 (0)1709 876 877

AardvarkSwift

Many people use it to check up on potential employees, but has social media really revolutionised the entire recruitment process? **Will Freeman** meets with several games industry recruiters to find out...

> ***"Social networking is a great way of keeping in touch on an informal basis, and it has become even more important than some jobsites."***
>
> Eamonn Mgherbi

THE formidable rise of Facebook and Twitter has had ramifications on every facet of the games industry. They are no longer only a space where industry insiders gossip. Now social networks are marketing tools, gaming platforms, and potentially a whole new hub for recuitment.

It's undoubtedly an interesting notion, and the idea of sourcing talent or finding a new job through familiar tools like LinkedIn and Facebook will certainly appeal to many people, especially cash-strapped studios. But are they really a reasonable model to apply to the long-established recruitment process?

"Personal networking has always been one of the most effective channels for both job seekers and recruiters," says Amiqus' Peter Leonard, pointing to the new model of recruitment through social networks as a simple and inevitable evolution of approaches already in existence.

"In one way social media is just turbo-charged personal networking," he adds. "For us at Amiqus it's only natural that social technologies have become an extension of our wider, integrated approach."

"Social networks play a very important role as part of games recruitment ," agrees Avatar Games Recruitment's managing director Eamonn Mgherbi. "They are a great way of keeping in touch with people on an informal basis, and it has become even more important than jobsites."

THE MISSING LINKEDIN?

With 80 million professionals registered on LinkedIn, and some half-a-billion people on Facebook, it's easy to see why recuiters see potential in these networks. Freelancers and microstudios certainly call on these huge pools of connected individuals to find or source employment, and bigger studios looking for people to take on work for hire positions are having the same idea.

Last year recruiter Specialmove carried out a survey of its candidate base in an attempt to get a sense of the value of social media in job hunting, and found that almost all of its candidates use Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to look for work. Undoubtedly then, at the user end of the recruitment process, those seeking employment are now looking to social networks to find work within the games industry.

However, senior executives of games industry recruitment firms almost naturally point out that social networking does not offer a complete recruitment solution.

"Social media does help, and in a technically savvy market like games these

Amiqus' Peter Leonard and Eamonn Mgherbi of Avatar (below)

recruiting through social media

Datascope's Julien Hofer and (below) Kim Adcock from OPM

channels are useful ways to communicate with your network," says Ian Goodall, director of Aardvark Swift. "But they aren't a stand alone solution. In my opinion a good recruiter should take the time to speak to candidates, explain the role fully and then to react accordingly."

So Twitter, Facebook and their contemporaries largely serve only to attract initial interest in vacancies. Part of the reason for that, say some observers, is that as a set of recruiting tools social media has its faults.

"LinkedIn is being used extensively by agencies and companies who have the time and expertise to utilise it effectively," says Kim Adcock, managing director of OPM Recruitment, adding: "However, it is enormous and finding the right candidates takes time and investment. Facebook is fun, but it's not really the way to go about approaching people professionally."

Adcock's point is a succinct one. Social media is not a specialised recruiting service, and the volume of people and information it collates makes it almost too big to manage. That is especially true for a studio with an internal hiring team with limited resources.

"Social media is one tool, not an exclusive model," states Julien Hofer, founder of recruiter Datascope. "They provide one means of accessing information, but the real challenge is to interpret, filter and add value to that information."

Specialmove CEO Andy Campbell

A CHANGE FOR THE SAME

What games industry recruiters – be they either internal studio HR teams or external agencies – must be able to do is be dynamic, and to deftly juggle the traditional recruitment methods with the new tools available to them like social networks.

"Recruitment is recruitment, it doesn't ever change," suggests Specialmove founder and CEO Andy Campbell. "What does change are the tools we use to search for, to identify and to attract the right candidate to the right role. In the end it all comes down to a good recruiter knowing the client and the role, selling those things effectively to the candidate, assessing the suitability of the candidates and progressing and managing the whole recruitment process efficiently."

"The process of recruitment is all about people," adds Adcock. "How we find them or they find us may continue to change, but the process is as simple as you want to make it. We still hire only career recruiters because they have the experience, maturity, and have learned the life lessons that are invaluable in recruitment of any kind."

Clearly many believe that the games industry recruitment process need not be changed by social media. Put another way, the established recruitment model has always been the same one that has embraced the new techniques and methods available to it; change being the only constant theme.

> ***"Social media does help, and in a technically-savvy market like games these channels are useful ways to communicate."***
>
> Ian Goodall, Aardvark Swift

There are, though, those people who believe that recruitment is changing right now, and in part because of the rise of social media use.

"Traditional recruitment is changing," suggests Mgherbi. "We believe it is changing very quickly. At Avatar we use different methods of recruiting, we go to more events, we create bespoke packages to most studios and we fit in where we are needed. The days

THE STUDIO LINE

How are the HR teams of studios and tech companies handling hiring in the changing recruitment landscape?

It's not only recruitment agencies that are turning to social media to bolster their human resource effort. Studios and tech companies are also looking to LinkedIn, Facebook and other personal networks to attract new staff.

"They are a tool that gives a perception of an organisation and its people and although the games industry is large and diverging all the time it is still closely linked through contacts, networks and reputations," says Sumo Digital's development director Craig Duncan. "Future recruits are more likely to join organisations they feel are successful and work with companies and people that have good reputations."

Social media isn't only about catching the attention of potential staff. For Crytek it's also a powerful search tool for proactively sourcing staff.

"We do use Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to seek out talent," says the tech outfit's Courtney Endecott. "It remains a great source for us, but certainly not our primary focus."

However, Endecott is quick to stress the importance of existing hiring methods: "Print, job fairs, web advertisement; they are all necessary and very important aspects of recruitment, each achieving its own goal. But the focus is changing and these sources often are more long-term employer branding and talent sourcing than they are an immediate fix. Social communities – on employer and employee side – will be the main source of recruitment in the coming years."

"We certainly use a blend of traditional methods and new, and assess the results continuously," adds Duncan. "We try and keep most recruitment channels open but will cut something if we are not getting the right success. I think as people are more comfortable in using social media and professional networking and gain success by these methods they will ultimately become dominate, but the timing of that is driven by potential candidates as well as the companies recruiting."

Cortney Endecott, Crytek

Criag Duncan, Sumo Digital

of CV searching are less popular to the alternative methods of social networking, competitions, word of mouth and actual colleague recommendation."

In general, most seem in agreement that a balanced approach to adapting hiring techniques is best; a viewpoint expressed by many including Amiqus' Leonard: "Traditional efforts related to advertising and job posting do remain relevant as candidates can still be sourced this way, and we believe they will last indefinitely.

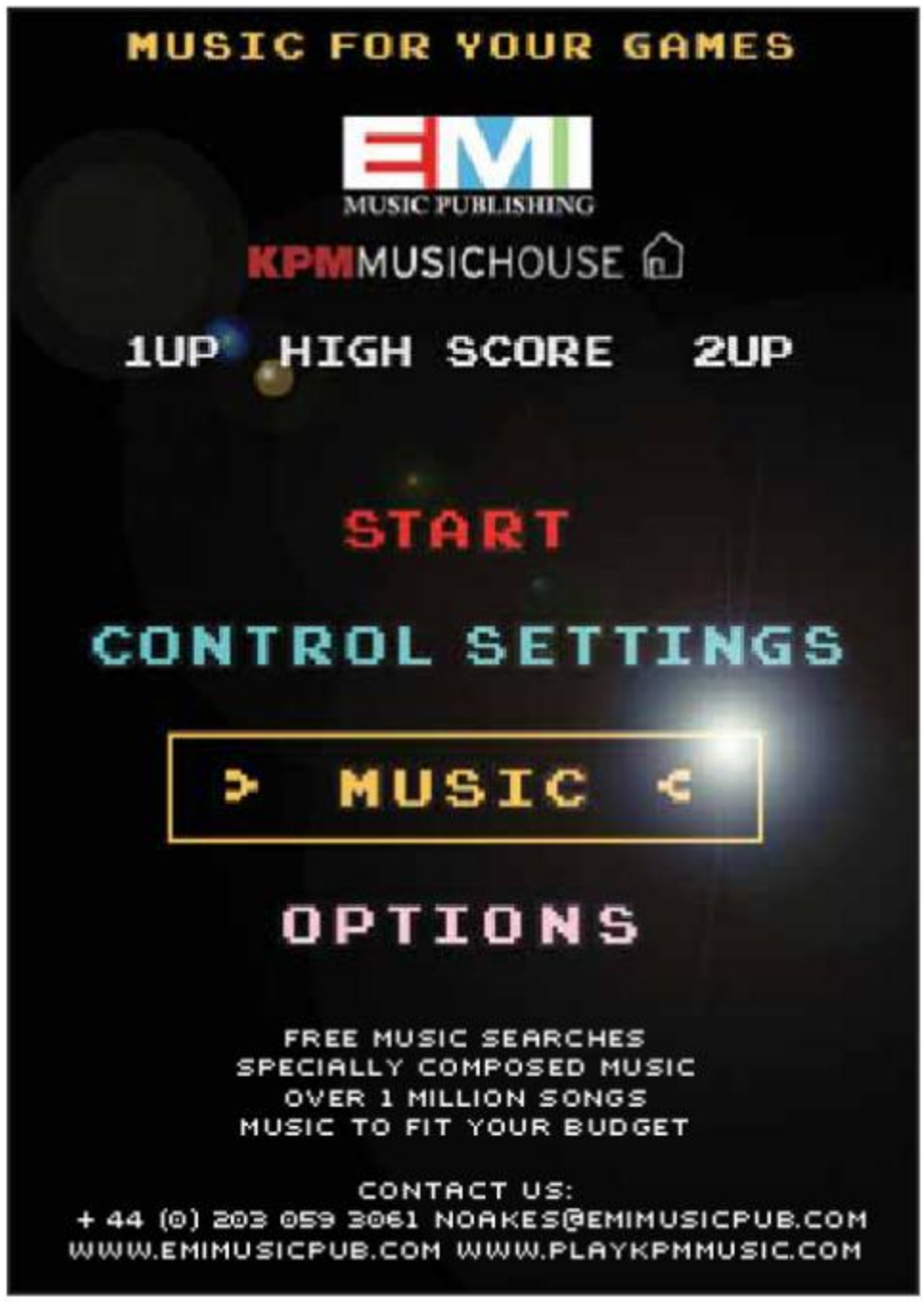
"However, as mentioned previously, so many of us are now staying connected through different means and to be able to reach as many relevant candidates as possible every time, we need to continue to formulate new and innovative strategies on how to communicate new live vacancies and information to potential candidates that studios are hiring."

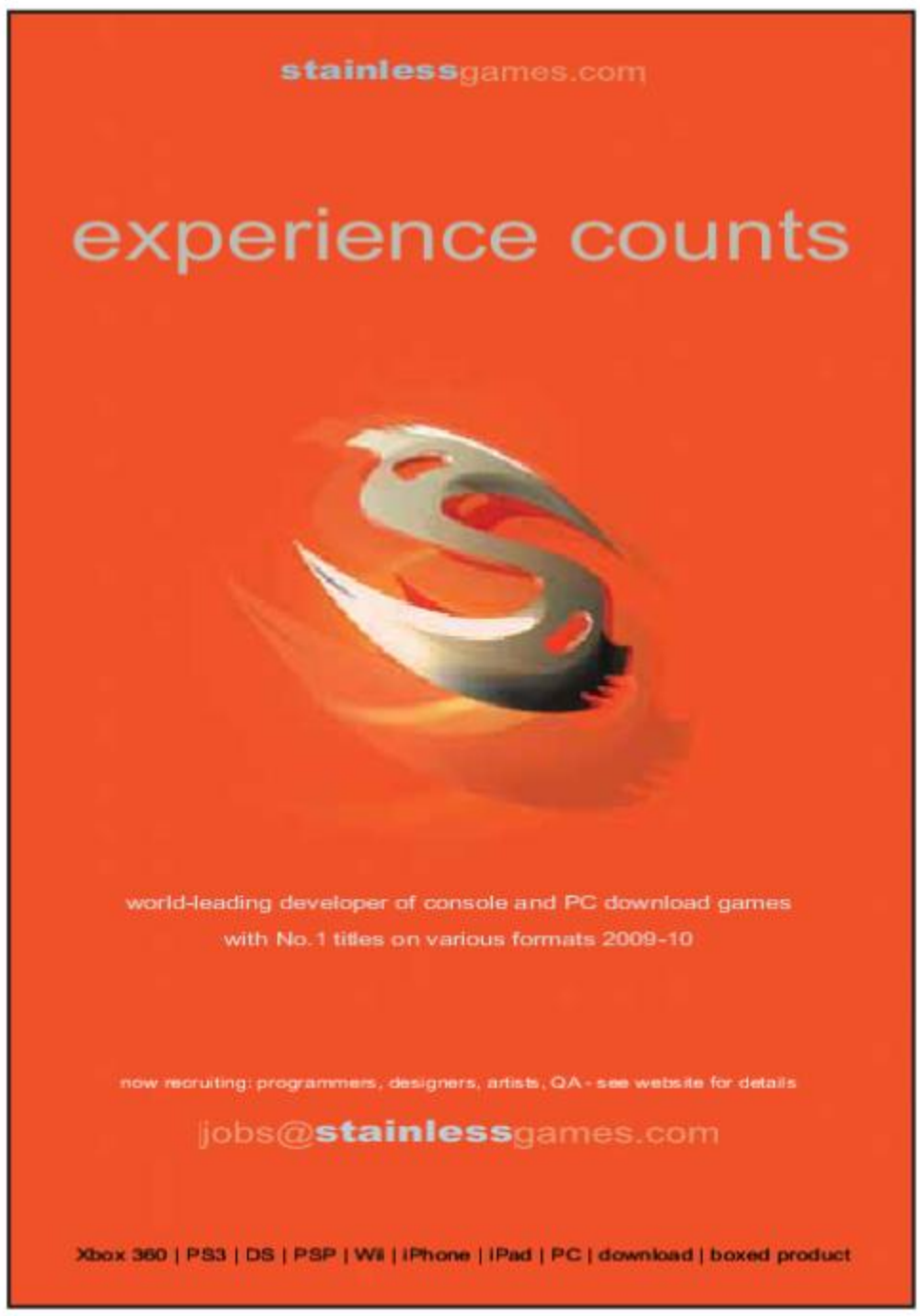
> ***"Traditional efforts related to advertising and job posting do remain relevant as candidates are still sourced this way."***
>
> Peter Leonard, Amiqus

And, says Aardvarks Swift's Ian Goodall, the future is a place where recruitment companies specialising in the games industry and related industry's will always have a place: "Agencies are just as relevant because many companies simply don't have the internal resource to spend time on recruitment. And even those that do recognise that they can only reach a certain percentage of the market. If they want the best then they need to have a mixed recruitment strategy."

Social media, most agree, adds a string to the bow of both recruiters and job seekers, but it is not an entire solution. Those looking to cast the widest net possible cannot afford to ignore the rise of social media, but to invest all your energy in trawling Facebook and LinkedIn may be a recipe for disaster.

Aardvark Swift's Ian Goodall




stainlessgames.com
experience counts
world-leading developer of console and PC download games
with No.1 titles on various formats 2009-10
now recruiting: programmers, designers, artists, QA - see website for details
jobs@stainlessgames.com
Xbox 360 | PS3 | DS | PSP | Wii | iPhone | iPad | PC | download | boxed product

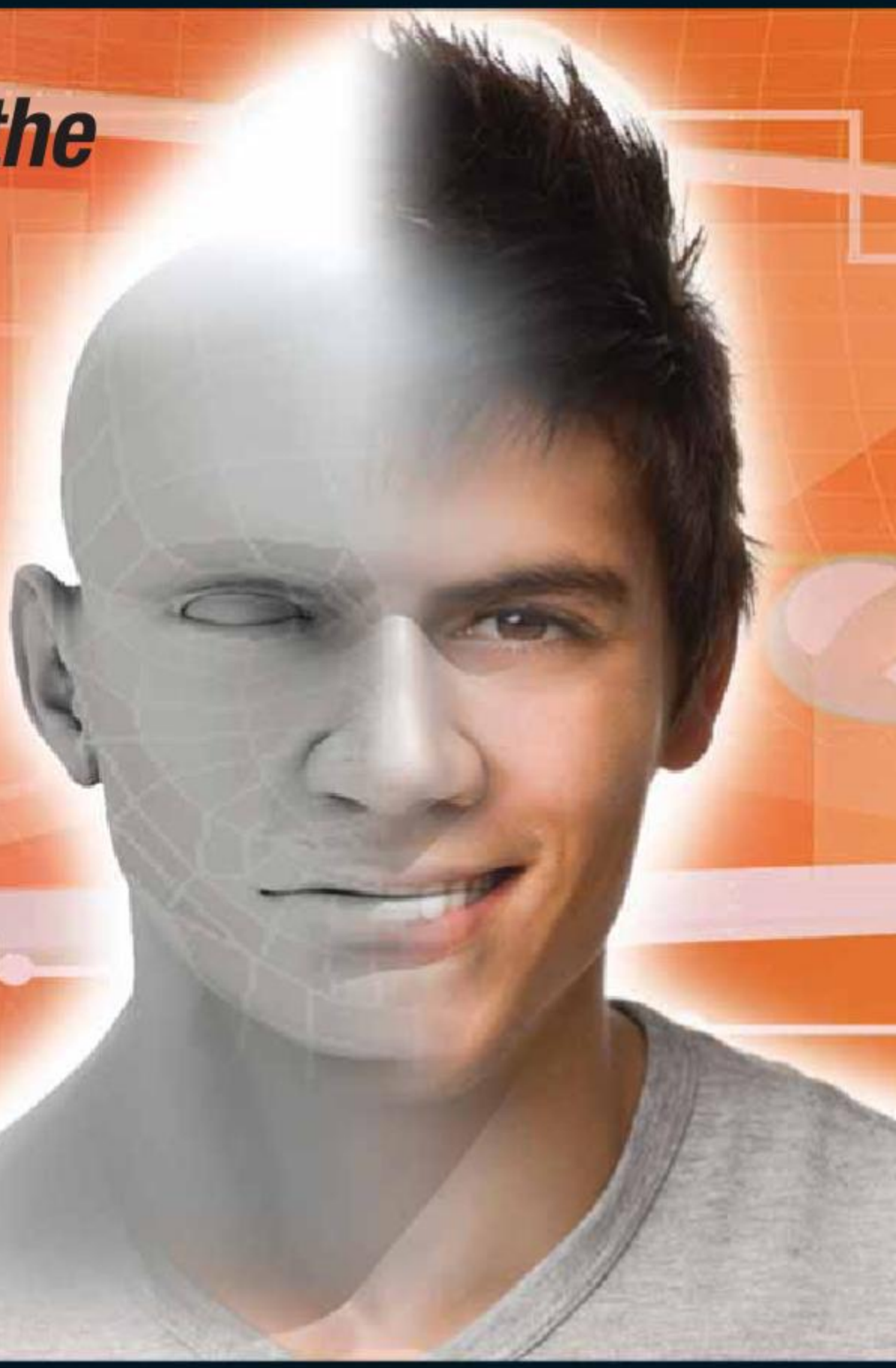
TRAIN 2 GAME™

Bring Your Dream Career to Life

If your perfect job centres around creating computer games and working in the world of creative media then now's the time to turn that vision into a reality. The UK has one of the most talented development communities in the world and you could train to become a part of this dynamic industry.

Train2Game will tutor you throughout your course to help provide you with a skill-set that is not only games industry relevant but is also fully transferrable across the creative media sector. As part of your course Train2Game will help you build your portfolio and showcase your talent to potential employees.

Are you made of the right stuff for a career in the Games Industry?



Courses available now:

- Games Design
- Games Programming
- Games Art/Animation
- QA - Sofware Testing

To find out more visit **mag.train2game.com**
or call us on **0845 2728792** and quote TM3

Supported by TIGA

TIGA™ Representing the Games Industry

Salary survey

For more facts, details and analysis check out the full report on Develop-Online.net

Last month, Develop invited games developers to take part in an extensive salary and career survey. Over 500 took part. Here, we offer highlights on wages across the UK and worldwide…

AVERAGE ANNUAL GLOBAL GAMES DEV SALARY

£32,203

WHO EARNS WHAT?

ART

- Lead Artist – **£37,000 p.a.**
- Artist – **£26,806 p.a.**

CODING

- Lead Programmer – **£39,958 p.a.**

(But can rise to £49,138 depending on seniority/experience)

- Programmer – **£27,416 p.a.**
- Junior Programmer – **£19,643 p.a.**

AUDIO

- Lead Audio Roles – **£45,200 p.a.**
- Junior Audio Roles – **£27,500 p.a.**

PRODUCTION

- Lead Producer *(Internal)* – **£41,500 p.a.**
- Producer *(Internal)* – **£31,195 p.a.**
- Producer *(External/publishing)* – **£41,250 p.a.**

(But can rise to £46,000 depending on publisher size)

DESIGN

- Lead Designer – **£34,000 p.a.**
- Designer – **£24,375 p.a.**
- Junior Designer – **£21,785 p.a.**

REGIONAL BREAKDOWN

South West Average games development salary: **£30,000 p.a.**

South East Average games development salary: **£29,729 p.a.**

East England Average games development salary: **£28,194 p.a.**

East Midlands Average games development salary: **£29,642 p.a.**

West Midlands Average games development salary: **£25,583 p.a.**

Yorkshire & Humberside Average games development salary: **£26,500 p.a.**

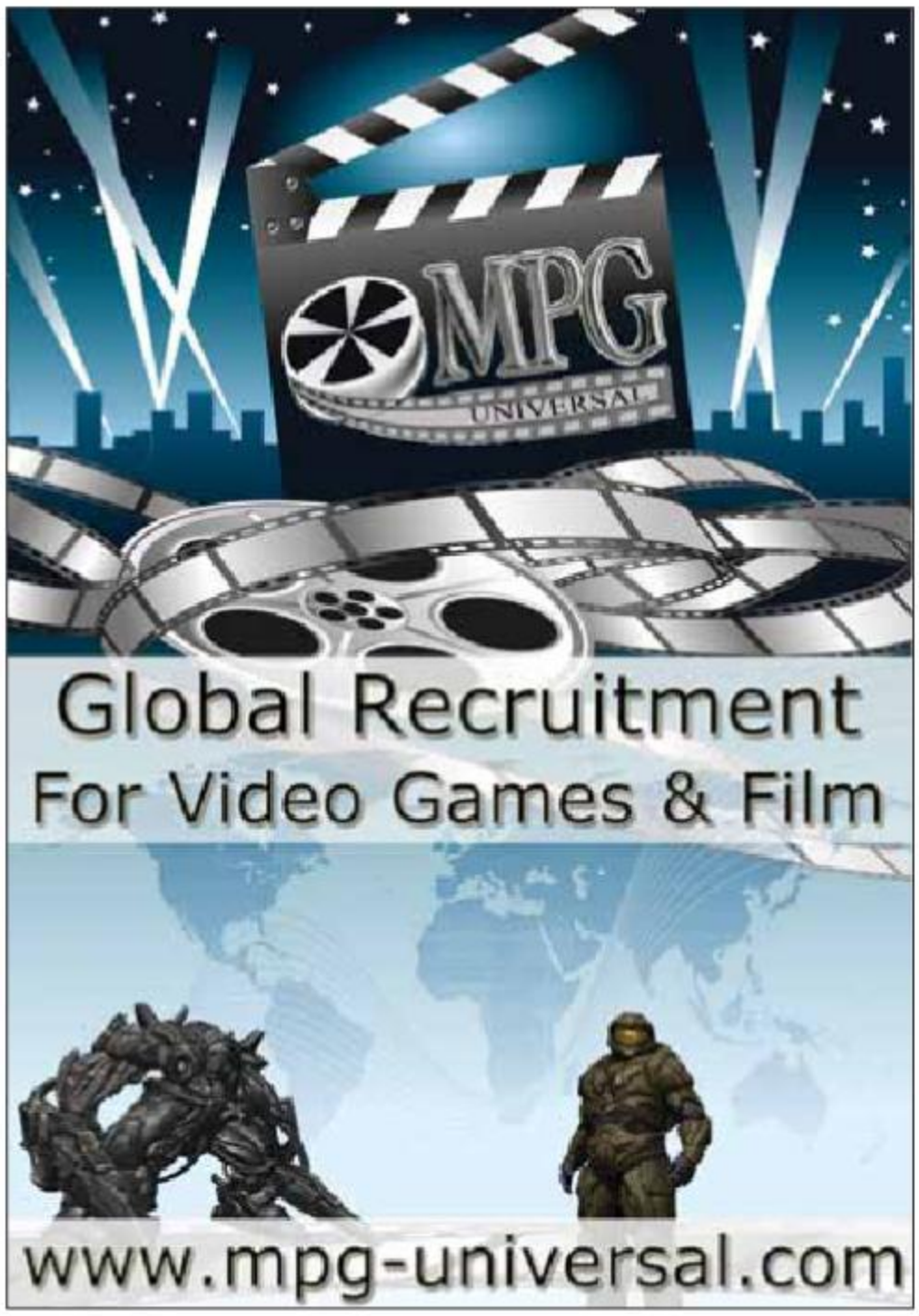
North West Average games development salary: **£27,308 p.a.**

North East Average games development salary: **£24,318 p.a.**

Scotland Average games development salary: **£30,500 p.a.**

London Average games development salary: **£35,375 p.a.**

Note: Results calculated from answers supplied by 298 UK games developers. Median average used to calculate answers, thus automatically discounting salaries from studio heads and similar selective highly-paid roles which would otherwise distort the data.


MPG
UNIVERSAL
Global Recruitment
For Video Games & Film
www.mpg-universal.com

city
interactive
Let Your Talent Shine at City
CITY INTERACTIVE HAS AN EXCITING LINEUP OF TITLES IN THE PIPELINE AND IS OPENING A DEVELOPMENT OFFICE IN THE UK. OPEN POSITIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:
LEAD LEVEL DESIGNER
MUST HAVE EXPERIENCE IN CONSOLE SHOOTERS.
EXPERIENCED GAME & LEVEL DESIGNERS
WORKED ON AT LEAST ONE PUBLISHED CONSOLE TITLE.
PLEASE SEND YOUR RESUME IN CONFIDENCE TO
RESUMES@CITY-INTERACTIVE.COM
AND ONE OF OUR HR REPRESENTATIVES
WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH YOU.

UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD
MAKING KNOWLEDGE WORK™
Department of Creative Technology
Undergraduate and
Postgraduate courses in:
■ Computer Animation
■ Visual Effects
■ Game Design
■ Game Development
BRADFORD FILM
TIGA
ESCAPE
BBC
NATIONAL MEDIA MUSEUM
skillset
Media Academy
Tel: 01274 235971
www.scim.brad.ac.uk

Money from **Home**

You may not know it, but in just two years PlayStation Home has gone from just a virtual world to a vibrant games platform. **Michael French** quizzed director Peter Edward on how the service and its team keep growing…

IF SOMEONE asked you to name all the PlayStation platforms, you know the obvious answers. PS3, PSP, PSN, perhaps Minis, and Move if you're going to be picky – and then there's PSP2 and the upcoming PSPhone.

What some may forget is Home.

Now two-years old, the online service – which today mixes social and community functions with a platform for smaller, more casual and instantaneous games – has blossomed. It's beloved by a set of key developers, with 120 studios around the world making content for Home. And it's making money for them too, through a mix of models that haven't found feet on any other console – such as microtransaction, virtual item sales, and freemium.

Now the London-based Global Platform team that looks after the service is expanding to keep up with the growth of its audience both in the industry and amongst the gamer community.

We sat down with PlayStation Home's platform director Peter Edward to find out more about what's next.

Home is two years old. What's changed as it has grown in size and age?

It's fantastic to be here still going strong. When we launched in December '08 we confidence in it, but we still had a lot to prove. The fact we are here two years later, with a userbase of 17m and10,000s of objects, hundreds of games and locations in the world… that all proves the potential was there. It is a force to be reckoned with.

For us on the platform, going from fighting for recognition to gaining acceptance amongst the development and publishing community and outside the games industry, is great. We are taken seriously, people want to develop on Home. We are a proven platform.

> ***"We're the first to admit it was basic at launch. Two years later Home has come on in leaps and bounds – it is vibrant, full of cool content and great games."***
>
> Peter Edward, PlayStation Home

Internally we've gone from being a product development team to an ongoing service development team which has required some fairly major changes in approach and attitudes from us.

We're not doing what normal games teams do – soldiering on at all costs towards a single ship date, then breathing a sigh of relief before going on holiday for months. Home is a continuous thing and we think more strategically about where we want to be in six months, a year, or two years. It's really a different mindset.

It's also asked for individual developers on the team to take a different mindset – they aren't being asked to develop a single feature, but develop something for an entire platform. People come to Sony to make games, so when we say 'You aren't making games any more, you're making a platform for other people to make games on'… well, that isn't necessarily what they came here for. But when you see the inspirational things other studios have done with your tools, you're constantly surprised and driven.

Was there perhaps a misconception when Home was first being built that this was just a virtual world for PS3 owners to chat in?

Certainly when we built the platform it was much more of a general, social platform for PS3. As it has grown up a bit we've also firmed up our ideas about what it is, what our

Home global platform boss Peter Edward says the virtual world has changed massively during its first two years on the market

PlayStation Home's many areas take in all kinds of themes – like this 'classic' British pub (above). Publishers also use it to sell branded avatar content (see Assassin's Creed outfit, far right)

strengths are, and what to build on. Hence our focus – people buy a PlayStation 3 to primarily play games. Sure, it does a lot of other great things, but PS3 is driven by that. So our audience is predominantly gamers. They want games.

Since we've clarified that vision we've seen a huge amount of success, interest and positive feedback from the development community and users that this is right, that's what makes people come back.

What is really heartening is that the vast majority of people on the team have reacted positively to that change. You expect that when you are developing a platform for other developers, the team will be reluctant, maybe even leave – but we haven't really seen that.

In that context, it's clearly a success. Is there an unsung story to Home's growth?

I hear all the time 'I logged on when it first launched but there was nothing there' – but I urge people to go back on there. It's been two years. We were always very proud of what we had achieved for launch, but we're the first to admit it was basic back then. Two years down the line it has come on in leaps and bounds, is vibrant, full of cool content and great games to play. It's free – those who aren't going in there are really missing out. If you think Home is what it was two years ago, do yourself a favour and have another look, you won't be disappointed.

So we're constantly trying to raise awareness. It's taken us a while to get to that clarified vision, admittedly – originally the broader view was harder to latch on to. But we're very proactive in the industry, especially when it comes to developer events like GDC or the Develop Conference, and the common thing we say is 'You almost certainly didn't realise how much you could do'.

Plus, it's free – for users and developers. Studios can download the Home Development Kit now and start playing with it. That's another area where our direction has been refined – we are focusing all our efforts on making the development experience as simple, cost-effect and easy as possible. At first we started seeding the world with our content, but we don't make anything anymore, it's all made by the developers.

Home includes a fully fledged online multiplayer engine. All developers have to do is focus on making really cool content. So there's great support from the Home team as well as the standard DevNet guys, there's 24/7 Network support, and the HDK is very easy to use. We're actually making it more configurable too – developers are getting used to it and want to play with it more, so we're freeing elements up for the more adventurous developers.

So who is the average Home user?

They're not that different from the PS3 demographic. But we find the more engaged, more active users are on there. Almost 'the hardcore of the hardcore' – but there's also a broad skew to the demographic. So we have a slightly more female, and wider age group logging on as well. But the most active are the more average gamers, and they are the most receptive to the idea of spending money in Home.

Amongst all those users, the average time spent on Home each time they log on is one hour, so they really are engaged – they're in there hoovering up content, talking to other users.

> ***"We're very proactive with developers. The most common thing we end up saying to people is 'You almost certainly didn't realise how much you could do'."***
>
> Peter Edward, PlayStation Home

For those not familiar, what's the business model for Home? At first there was a lot of talk about creating promotional spaces for brands – but now it's a games platform.

Well, there are a number of brands that do see Home as a really good promotional space and a way to reach a very passionate community. That has panned out. But, importantly, the ones that work are those who know they have to offer a gaming experience.

Take Audi – they worked with a third-party to create some games in Home. Users kept playing, and Audi has since put more games in. Actual, decent fun games. Red Bull has seen the same results. What doesn't work is just creating a showroom – but Home wasn't really about that in the first place, and the smarter companies get that.

From a business point of view, virtual items and microtransactions… it just works. We have tens of thousands of items, and they are making money. There are some developers solely working on Home now, which speaks a lot to the success we can create. There are developers making money from virtual items in Home, simple as that.

But you've also got the free to play and freemium model. *Sodium*, the game by Lockwood, is a great example of that. They offer the first five levels of their game for free, but to get the other 45 you have to buy an item of clothing for your avatar to wear that unlocks that access. They've had a massive conversion rate – 25 per cent of players pay up.

Why does that work? Is it just the idea of buying a scarf to unlock a game is quirky and fun?

Well, firstly it's a good game. That's a good start. There are lots of opinions on how much of a game you give away for free, but for most users the pleasure comes from having invested time to become good at a game that's free, then wanting to prove that value by paying a bit extra. *Sodium*'s access isn't particularly expensive, and when you do pay for it, you get something to customise your avatar with – that's a really nice way of showing your allegiance to things, and proving your interests. If you buy a *Killzone* outfit, you're proving you're a *Killzone* fan. And if you get a benefit alongside that, then even better.

There was an Amazon pre-order for *Killzone 2* which gave you a Home item when you ordered the game – that really drove pre-orders. So it's proven in both directions.

The other model is pay to play – the Midway Arcade has been hugely successful and they've just launched Midway 2, which speaks for itself. *Sodium 2* is on the way too, which all just proves developers and users are coming back for more. If you make something that people want to come back to and play again and pay for, then there is money to be made on Home.

Virtual worlds on PC have floundered during Home's lifespan, either as the model migrated to social networks or as potential environments petered out. How has Home been strong as others lost ground?

Knowing and understanding our customers was the big step. Focusing on games helped us

refine what is a platform that enhances the idea of 'entering' a platform to get games.

There's something we call 'Total Gaming Integration' that Home allows. So for instance if you play *Red Dead Redemption* you unlock *Red Dead Redemption* items in Home. Or the *SOCOM* area, where we have an 'assemble an AK47' speedtest game that unlocks a gold AK47 – but for both your avatar, and for use in the game itself.

That's something we can do that no one else can. The items let consumers show how much they love key games, but it gives them a reward during gameplay too. It's also hugely rewarding for the developers and publishers. Because often the situation is that, when the disc is in the drive – assuming the console is on – you are in touch with the publisher. But when the disc isn't spinning, you're disconnected. In Home, if you're on in the *Killzone* space, you're still connecting to the game, and of course you can launch games direct from Home, so it all becomes seamless.

The analogy I use was the five-a-side football example – you don't just appear on the pitch to play, you all meet up before hand to talk about the game maybe over breakfast, you travel there together, then head down the pub to discuss it.

Another strength has been quality. There's a PlayStation level of quality. It's a managed platform, so we make sure everyone's efforts get seen by our users. I won't go on about the difficulties even the best mobile or download games have getting seen in some channels, but that's not something we struggle with.

Plus, the community is very vocal, passionate and active. We run events for them – but early on the users were off ahead of us organising events, such as pub quizzes in game, and sourcing their own prizes.

And it's a secure platform – users confidently spend time and money in a safe environment, which counts for a lot.

Do you think the industry understands that Home offers all that potential?

I think a lot of the industry understands it – and I think there are a lot of people in the industry who don't realise how much the others understand it.

So, there are 120 studios using the HDK and making content with it. That's a huge community already using the platform.

Having said that, there is a section of the development community that doesn't realise. That's why we're trying to get the news out there.

And our focus has been on getting as much focus on the HDK as possible to make it as easy as possible.

Everybody knows that current-gen flagship console development is not cheap – that's why mobile and handheld development is so popular right now, the barriers to entry are so much lower. But Home offers an opportunity to get on a console when you have a web/mobile budget. That appeals to indie developers because they can get something on a console for a realistic response and in a good timescale. That also means they can experiment and be a bit innovative.

That's a good message for developers worried about discoverability on mobile or being lost in a flurry of apps.

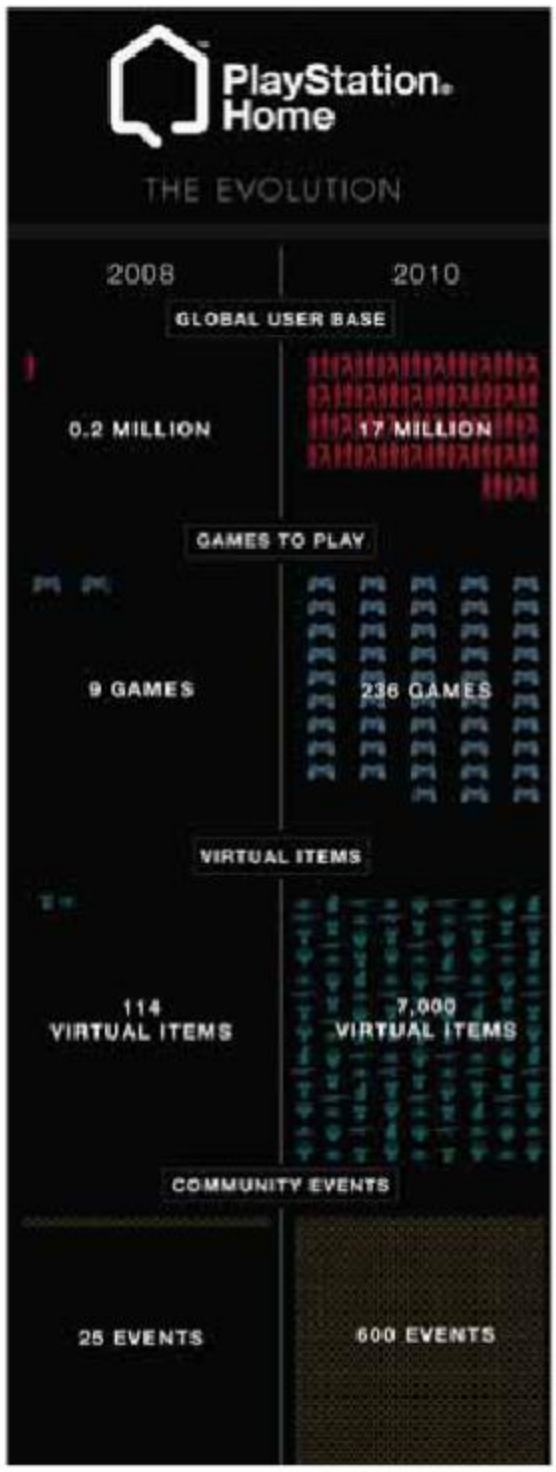
Exactly. We're in a position to ensure that doesn't happen – everyone gets a fair crack of the whip and we have lots of ways to promote what's in Home. That bustling community also has its own community media through their blogs and so on, as well as official channels like our various PlayStation Blogs.

> ***"Home is a managed platform, so the discovery issues the best mobile or download games have seen in some channels is not something we struggle with."***
>
> Peter Edward, PlayStation Home

You're growing the home team – who are you looking for? And how many?

We're over 70 at the moment, and are looking for around ten or so more.

Ultimately we're a tools and technology platform, so we're looking for people to expand that. The skills are obvious from one point of view – server programmers, engineers, and so on. But also we are growing to include things like operations. We've got nine different teams supporting the platform, which makes us a microcosm of the whole PlayStation business.



This sexy infograph from SCEA, while only showing US numbers, proves the vibrancy and growth of PlayStation Home

The important thing when it comes to growing the team is finding people who are going to be inspired by what other people can create with the platform they produce. We've undergone a mindset change on the existing team and we need people who are inspired by that.

And SCEE tends to pride itself on having a very broad skill base of staff drawn from all kinds of industries – does that play into how you're growing the team?

The aim is always to recruit the very best people, which takes time and means we don't just fill a role. That tends to mean we do often look outside the games industry, because the chance to work on games is attractive, but you can find different enthusiasms, aptitudes and professional attitudes in other sectors.

Of course experience is useful, but we'd never discount someone because they don't necessarily know games well. If you're trying to make games and content for the social or casual space or whatever you want to call it, that really helps, and growing the gene pool pays off in every direction. You only have to look at London Studio – which made EyeToy, *SingStar* and Home – to see that we have a very broad mix of products, which to a great extent represents our broadminded outlook.

www.playstationjobs.co.uk

THE HOT LIST

Develop 100 lists the world's 100 most successful games studios based on key market data from GfK-ChartTrack

Published with Develop in May and MCV on Tuesday May 3rd
See new microsite at **www.develop100.com** from Tuesday May 3rd

12,000 copies plus digital edition. Additional circulation of Develop 100 at Develop Conference Brighton in July and Develop Industry Excellence Awards

>>>>>>>>>>

Ad copy deadline: Friday April 15th

Contact alex.boucher@intentmedia.co.uk
for advertising and sponsorship opportunities
+44 (0) 1992 535 647

Double-Barreled Shogun

Stuart Richardson sat down with the team at The Creative Assembly to find out what the upcoming release of Shogun 2 will mean for the Total War series, and how the studio manages its team...

The Creative Assembly Operations and HR Assistant Emma Cole and (above) Tools and Infrastructure Lead Guy Davidson

THE CREATIVE Assembly's Total War series has been giving gamers the opportunity to play at time-travelling megalomaniac for over a decade now. With the latest installment, *Total War: Shogun 2*, set to revisit the feudal Japan setting of the very first title, *Develop* went to find out what the new game is all about.

What changes have occurred to the Total War team during the development of Shogun 2?

Emma Cole, Operations Assistant: The development of the *Total War* team is certainly on-going and there is more of an ebb and flow than a rise and fall.

With *Shogun 2* we have been lucky enough to have the addition of experienced designers, animators and programmers. This has given a greater depth of knowledge and experience that I'm confident will show in the game. With new employees always comes a wave of fresh ideas and enthusiasm; creating a ripple effect at the studio. The changes have been and continue to be positive.

Is there a particular team structure used for the development of Total War titles?

EC: Specific jobs for specific people are always necessary, especially so if you are looking for a new 3D character artist or graphics coder and only someone with star quality will do.

There are some really fantastic people working in and outside of the industry with skills that are specific to what we have available. However, there is always that one-off, speculative application that excites us. It is often from someone who has amazing potential but doesn't quite fit what we have open. We have been flexible enough to be able to utilise applicants like this in the past and it always makes for a brilliant addition.

> ***"We've gone through two revisions of the code base – we're onto our third engine now, which debuted with Empire and has grown from strength to strength."***
>
> Guy Davidson, Tools Lead

We feel that we can recognise when we need to be both specific and flexible, that recruitment won't always fit into a specified formula. We feel we are fortunate enough to be at the coalface with our hiring and as a result have been able to develop a good understanding of what is needed and when.

What are the most significant changes that have occurred under-the-hood of the Total War series?

Guy Davidson, Tools Lead: We've gone through two revisions of the code base – we're onto our third engine now, which

debuted with *Empire* and has grown from strength to strength. The engine is more suited to a larger team with more clearly defined boundaries between the various areas. This has allowed us to concentrate on particular aspects of the game. Additionally, we have been able to fix bugs and carry through perfected code more effectively.

The team has also grown in strength. We now have world class C++ developers scattered liberally through the programming corps. I have turned down interview candidates that, five years ago, I would have rolled out the red carpet for.

Is it fair to say that the ratio of internally developed tools to outsourced ones is quite high on the Total War series?
GD: We've been able to increase the scope and breadth of our vision for streamlining the development of the assets and delivering builds to clients. For example, we have been able to develop a custom database front end which cooperates with Perforce, allowing branching and merging of tables. This is an example of a tool which does not exist in the outside world (to the best of our research at the time of development) but which was too large to develop without a dedicated team.

Before we developed our db solution, we had to rely on a third party solution and deal with branch/merge issues manually, which was quite vile and error prone. We simply had to take the hit. Once the team got so large that the cost of taking the hit outweighed the cost of developing our own solution, the way forward became all too obvious. All tools need to serve the purpose of reducing costs. We could develop the whole game using free tools but the time taken would be greatly increased. Good tools reduce the development labour costs. The most obvious by-product of that is polish: we're expecting *Total War: Shogun 2* to be our most polished product yet.

Were any specific new tools introduced during the development of Total War: Shogun 2?
GD: DaVE, the Database Visual Editor, is the most prominent newcomer, making schema and table modification and data export a breeze compared to ye olden days. The expansion of BOB, our Build on One Button tool, has been considerable, allowing clients to not only prepare their data and build binaries automatically, but also to simply fetch cached builds from a server, which is ideal for our QA department. TEd, The Editor, has grown to accommodate editing campaign maps as well as battlefield maps.

There haven't been many new tools – our first year as a tools team was during the development of Napoleon which allowed us to cover most of the bases. The second year has allowed us to consolidate the tools we developed. Next year we're looking at assisting individual departments, integrating their workflow into BOB and providing tools which allow them to develop or review those aspects of their work which are tightly coupled to the game more easily. The sound and animation departments are on our radar at the moment for our next iteration. I would expect the following year to be another year of consolidation and improvement of existing work, and for the cycle to continue like that as individual departments grow.

> ***"Multiplayer is the area which has changed the most. I set the MP designers an objective to do something revolutionary with multiplayer."***
>
> Mike Simpson, Creative Director

What kind of new gameplay elements can we expect to see in Shogun 2?
Mike Simpson, Creative Director: Multiplayer is the area which has changed the most. I set the MP designers an objective to do something revolutionary with multiplayer. The players will have to judge whether we've achieved that, but it's looking very promising. The turn-based campaign has also changed a lot. The kind of mechanics we used to depict 18th Century Europe don't apply to feudal Japan, so economics, trade, the way buildings and castles work and technology all have changed. We've also added much stronger RPG elements such as skill trees for generals and agents, and increased the importance of resources to put more in differentiation between regions. This is a game that is much more about collecting bonuses from a wide variety of sources and combining them together alongside a strategy that exploits those bonuses. On the battlefield, Japanese style siege battles have exposed a rich mine of new gameplay, naval battles are very different too, and we've had a lot of fun with unit powers, unit bonuses and unit customisation. The AI has also taken a massive leap forward across the board.

What was the reason for returning to the feudal Japan for this latest installment of the Total War series?
MS: The short answer is because the team wanted to. *Shogun* is the perfect scenario for *TW* – lots of factions any of which could have won, a technology race kicked off by the introduction of gunpowder weapons, and fascinating units, architecture, culture and history. There is so much we couldn't do the first time round we just had to go back to it for a second run.

What is it about the great battles of history that continues to interest Creative Assembly?
MS: What we do is to put the player into the role of a King or Emperor or general at a particular point in time. It's not just about battles – the player is running the country, dealing with the economy, technology, internal politics, external diplomacy, developing his military capability, building armies, engaging enemies and only then fighting the battles. The settings are utterly believable because they were real, but the adage that reality is stranger than fiction often applies, and we pick eras and locations which serve up truly compelling content. From a gameplay point of view historical scenarios are always perfectly balanced – they evolved naturally, and if anything was unbalanced things would have been different. So every unit has its nemesis, and every strategy has its counter. We may not even know what it is when we're making the game, but so long as we're accurate with our simulation then real world tactics will work in the game. Finding out what those tactics are is as much fun for us as it is for the players.

Will the series be expanding in any other ways?
MS: I can't say anything specific about our future plans, but we do still have a console team and they are working on something big. It's probably not what anyone is expecting from us.

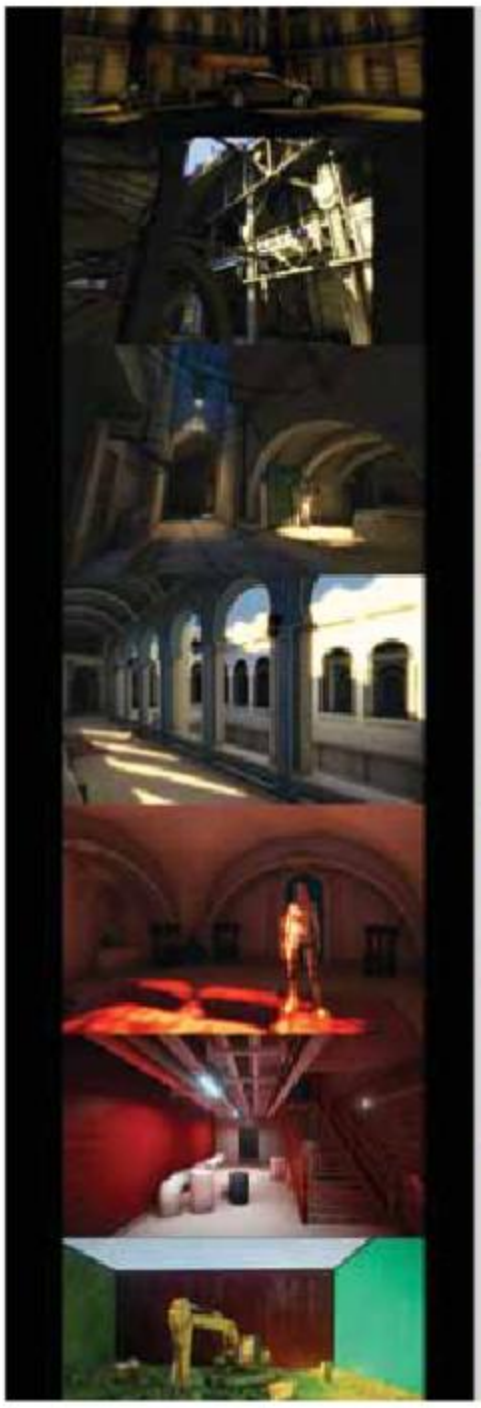
Total War Creative Director Mike Simpson

ASOBO STUDIO

XBOX 360 | PS3 | WII | PSP | PC | MAC

Now hiring:
Engine and Gameplay Programmers
Lead Game Designer
3D Art Outsourcing Director
3D Animation Outsourcing Director

jobs@asobostudio.com
See website for details: www.asobostudio.com



Geomerics

ENLIGHTEN

World leading lighting technology from the heart of Cambridge

Geomerics is proud to be a founding member of games eden

GDC

Contact: sales@geomerics.com
to arrange a demo at GDC 2011

Where Do You Picture Yourself?

SN Systems has been creating development tools for the games industry since 1990 and became a wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc (SCEI) in 2005. With offices in England, Ireland and the USA we are looking for innovative professionals with proven experience to join our family.

Our goal is to provide PlayStation® game title developers with exceptional development tools and first class support while having some fun along the way.

We are recruiting C/C++ programmers for the following applications:

- Compilers
- Linkers
- Debuggers
- Performance Analysis Tools

Visit www.snsys.com/careers/2011 for our current vacancies.

SN SYSTEMS

It's big ...and it's clever

With over 1,000 developers working in Cambridge the city is one of the UK's most substantial hubs. **Will Freeman** finds out what makes it so special...

OVER 10 PER CENT of those employed in the UK games development sector work in Cambridge. It's a simple statistic that speaks volumes about the University city's status as an industry hub.

As well as being home to the Jagex, Frontier, a large Sony studio and Ninja Theory, Cambridge also plays host to a fiercely proactive indie scene, and is peppered with high profile technology facilities such as Microsoft Cambridge Research. Well served by its internationally famous educational institutions, it's not hard to guess why so many companies across the spheres of science, technology and finance have converged on the city. It is affluent, compact and picturesque, and as such, it's hugely popular with those that call it home, and those looking to move to pastures new.

GOOD LIVING

"Cambridge offers us more than just good graduates," confirms Jagex COO Rob Smith. "It's an attractive place to relocate to, and that's important, because the more competitive the games space gets, the more we need top quality staff. That can mean people that have been in the industry for five or ten years. Attracting those people to come here is easy because it's such a nice place to live."

And it's not just that Cambridge makes a tempting proposition for those looking for a career change. There's a general consensus among those employed in the games industry hub that it is also a hard place to leave.

"People develop a deep affection for Cambridge, and it really is the case that very often they don't want to leave," suggests Rob Precious, VP of Geomerics, the middleware outfit behind real-time radiosity lighting solution Enlighten.

> ***"Cambridge offers us more than just good graduates. It's an attractive place to relocate to, and that's important for attracting top quality staff."***
>
> Rob Smith, Jagex

"There's also an image of Cambridge as being conservative and traditional and very erudite," adds Caroline Hyde, project manager at Creative Front, a network that brings together creative industries across the area. "The reality is that actually it is a really vibrant, creative city. There's 12,000 people here employed in the creative industries, and 1,600 different companies."

Hyde isn't alone as an advocate of modern Cambridge as a city that defies stereotypes about stuffy, upper class academics and eccentric intellectuals.

"For us as a localisation agency having such a diverse mix of nationalities, either from the university itself or from Cambridge being such a cosmopolitan city, has been an absolute win," says Vickie Peggs, CEO of localisation company Universally Speaking.

With the aforementioned powerhouses such as Jagex based in Cambridge, it clearly has something that makes it alluring to developers. Part of the attraction is that the very fact that the city is so popular with big name studios, says James Shepherd, development director at Sony Cambridge: "What's really good for us is that there's so many other game companies here. There's already a pool of working talent here, and that is definitely an advantage for absolutely everybody."

Beyond that, the international regard Cambridge courts is also of great benefit to the games companies based in the city.

"Most of our clients are global, across Asia, the United States and Europe, and in all those place people recognise Cambridge," says Peggs. "Cambridge is very much like a brand in many ways. People instantly know Cambridge when you talk to them, and in that way being here is extremely beneficial for us."

WELL EDUCATED

Aside from the city's merits as a place to relocate to or set up a studio, it is also obviously highly regarded as a place that produces top quality postgraduate talent.

As well as the internationally famed Cambridge University and its numerous colleges – which provide a wealth of students trained in traditional academic disciplines such as physics, maths and computer science – the long standing Anglia Ruskin offers a range of game-specific courses.

"There's been a real effort to open up a dialogue between the games industry here and academia," says Hyde. "We've tried to look at what the industry needs, and how universities can respond to that with the course they develop and the relationships they form. That's something being championed by Sony and it's something we're continuing to develop."

There's a general consensus between the developers gathered to speak to *Develop* that links with the universities are improving, and plenty of in the field examples of collaboration. Sony Cambridge, for example, struggled to find students suitably trained in design, so worked with local educational institutions to improve the situation.

There is, however, a small disadvantage to Cambridge's bristling pool of intellectual youngsters, and it's something that Frontier's founder David Braben first addresses.

"In my experience the graduates from Cambridge still have absolutely no problem getting themselves a job," he reveals. "The problem is the other way around; it's finding those very few people."

The fact is, game developers aren't the only ones interested in Cambridge's highly desirable educated talent.

"There's a little bit of competition from other industries for Cambridge's educated talent," confirms Ninja Theory's technology boss Mike Ball. "Many of us in Cambridge have been at a computer science fair, looking to recruit, and you see people from the banking sector offering really big salaries. But the fact is a lot of people of want to work in games are very passionate about it."

> ***"What's really good for us is that there's so many other game companies here. There's already a pool of working talent, and that is a big advantage."***
>
> James Shepherd, Sony

COMMUNITY MATTERS

One thing Cambridge's developers have learned to do in a city filled with technology and science companies is club together, forming a community that is almost exclusively fondly spoken of.

"Developers here do talk to one another a lot," explains Braben. "Certainly there is a sense of community here. I think with any industry is if it is too dispersed there is no pool of people. There are a lot of people here in Cambridge that have worked at other locally-based developers."

"While there hasn't been too much happening in terms of project collaboration, what we have been doing is coming together as Games Eden to try and promote the region and investment into the region," adds Precious. "That's on both an education front and a purely commercial front, and on that level the Cambridge studios are absolutely communicating and collaborating."

Games Eden is a business network portal for the East of England's computer games industry, and involves input from a number of local companies, including indies. The collaboration and community shared between small scale studios in Cambridge has greatly increased in the past 12 months.

"What we've found is that there's a lot of people in the larger Cambridge studios itching to go indie, as you might expect given the movement within the wider industry," says Jon Skuse, co-owner of Jumped Up Games. "The concentration and community of indie developers is starting to develop a critical mass in Cambridge."

Further up the food chain, Sony is looking to work more closely with other people in the area, and is keen to do more: "We'd certainly like to work more closely with other people in the area, definitely," confirms Shepherd. "There's different models of development, and I think if you work with other people like we did with Ninja Theory, it can bring in new blood and new ideas. I'd like to see more of that here."

Ask Cambridge's developer community about challenges specific to their sector in their city, and largely you'll draw a blank. Local developers are of course victim to the

Independent Cambridge

Develop catches up with three of Cambridge's globally acclaimed indie development stars

CAMBRIDGE ISN'T only a hub for the giants of UK game development. It has also incubated a thriving fringe scene that has attracted and fostered some of the biggest names indie development.

WWW creator Terry Cavanagh now calls the city home, joining Introversion's Chris Delay and Starfruit's Hayden Scott-Baron as a resident of Cambridge.

"It's hard to say why Cambridge is so good for indies," admits Delay. "It does have a disproportionately large number of game developers for its size. It's partly because there's a lot of young people here because of the universities, and a lot of very technically-minded people."

Terry Cavanagh, Chris Delay and Hayden Scott-Baron

broader issues overshadowing UK development, but on the whole they are very happy with their lot.

CHALLENGING TIMES

It's only natural that it's not all good news. "Cost of living is high, especially in the city centre, and it's starting to be expensive if you live in the surrounding villages. Even parking and those kind of things are slightly higher than they are in other parts of the UK," admits Jagex's Smith. "When we went up and spoke to those who recently lost their jobs at Realtime Worlds in Dundee, and their main worry about Cambridge was cost of living."

But he's still optimistic, even when addressing the reality of affording life in such a desirable area: "Of course, it's still a great deal cheaper than London."

What the future holds for Cambridge remains to be seen, but most agree that it will be defined by success stories. Furthermore, many developers based in the area believe the coming years will see an increasing number of start-ups move on the city.

"I think that as the development industry here grows, so will the number of students considering working in games," suggests Chris Joyce, senior lecture in games and visual effects at Anglia Ruskin University. "I think many of those graduates will probably go on to found a lot of new start-up companies here in Cambridge."

"You'll also see more diversification," adds Skuse. "Today Cambridge is very much weighted towards core games development. That's going to change. I think you'll see not only casual games rise, but also Cambridge can lead the way with new iterations of online entertainment and other forms that are on the fringe of what is generally accepted as a game."

Above: Punting in the idyllic city

Certainly, there's an optimism and sense of collective responsibility in Cambridge that even the thickest skinned cynics should find hard not to warm to. Equally, there's a positive outlook that the city's development elite seems to have absolute conviction in.

With that kind of attitude, the future of Cambridge as an increasingly prominent stronghold of the UK development sector seems assured.

Perhaps Cambridge's 10 per cent share of the UK industry is just the beginning.

"It's a great city for Indies in that there's so many places you can meet up for free or cheap," adds Scott-Baron. "There's also the fact that you can walk everywhere, and venues don't overcharge to host events. Often thy're free, unlike elsewhere. It's nothing like London here. Cambridge has just the right atmosphere for indie developers."

Whatever the reason for Cambridge's emergence as an indie stronghold, there's little doubt that things are constantly improving, as Cavanagh confirms: "I think that since the start of last year there's been a lot of momentum building. There's been something of a snowball effect in the area."

Cavanagh moved to Cambridge from Ireland, having considered a relocation in either the University city or the bustle of London, which is an hour from Cambridge by train. Somewhat ironically his final decision was in part motivated by the triple-A powerhouses that dominate many of Cambridge's industrial areas. "When I moved here I did consider that if the whole indie thing did not work out, there are a lot of big games companies here," he reveals. "People from those game companies do sometimes come to our meetings."

Cambridge's indie scene also benefits from the efforts of its fiercely proactive evangelists. Meet-ups and design challenges are regular, plentiful and well attended, and the doors are constantly open to those from further afield.

"The indie scene here isn't a closed group or anything like that, and we keep trying to get people involved," says Delay. "For example, I've been trying to get Eskil Steenberg – the guy who made Love – to come along. He keeps talking about setting up in London, and we keep telling him 'forget London; come to Cambridge. This is where its going on'.

"There's people here that focus on quite commercial iPhone titles, and people like Terry doing on-the-edge PC indie stuff, and then there's what we do with our games at Introversion. We're all a quite bit different, and I'd even say there's more variety in the local indie community than across the biggest Cambridge studios like Jagex and Frontier."

Clearly, Cambridge's indie elite are as enamoured by the city they call home as their triple-A neighbours.

Fortune Tellers

The Creative Industries Knowledge Transfer Network is a UK think-tank dedicated to predicting the future of the creative industries in Britain. **Develop** sat in on a meeting with Tiga CEO Richard Wilson and quizzed both on what's in store for national games development...

How does the CIKT Network function?
John Cass, Director, CIKTN: We are funded by the government through an agency called the Technology Strategy Board. They exist to accelerate business innovation in the UK, giving grants to companies seeking to get risky products and services off the ground and funding Knowledge Transfer Networks to build communities in many different sectors.

Our network serves the creative industries. We link businesses together and help them to understand the future, as well as to discover funding opportunities through the TSB and the private sector

What has your work taught you about the likely future of the games development industry in the UK?
JC: Our research led us to three central provocations: One, content experience is king; Two, convergence is critical; Three, privacy is tradable.

For the first point, what we will see in the future is that the content will be experienced in a particular context each time. So, the particular way in which content is delivered to an end user on their mobile, TV, console or PC, in fact any platform at all, is going to become a critically important dimension of the overall experience.

Games companies are way ahead of the curve here. I think that, generally, this is one thing that most people are realising quite slowly, but the games industry has been integral in showing how critical the user experience is. I wonder if they could take that kind of quality of thinking and work with other sectors to be able to deliver an improved experience of interaction with content in the future. For film industry, or for TV or whatever.

> ***"Those who work together to create great games alongside great TV programmes will give everybody a better experience of the content."***
>
> Richard Wilson, Tiga

Richard Wilson, Tiga: I agree that in the future successful companies will be the ones who integrate with others across sector boundaries. Those who work together to create great games alongside great TV programmes will give everybody a better experience of the content. In fact, the process of marrying these two things together has already happened in other countries.

JC: I think that a smarter model would be something like *Lilo & Stitch*, the Disney characters, which have gone through films, TV and games. Something like that, coming up from a level of real grassroots interest, could be very powerful.

People are really quite unlikely to want to invest £100m in a brand new video games IP straight away, but by having a quirky, interesting character in a series of small casual games, and perhaps releasing that on Facebook, then turning that into a show online before bringing that show to the TV, that is more of the kind of migratory pattern that I think should be happening.

LittleBigPlanet is a great idea, to do it in that way. Actually getting people to create their own characters and levels, so you have

Geoffrey McCormick, John Cass and Richard Wilson (left to right)

this user generated content that may turn into something else over time within the game's community.

Are there any other opportunities available to UK developers?

RW: The UK also has an advantage in the education market. We're the second most popular destination for overseas students looking to learn about games development, which when you consider our funding is really extraordinary.

Tiga research has put the amount of UK developers making serious education games at approximately 20 per cent, which is very high. These games aren't their main focus, but being able to play a game while learning seems to make people take games more seriously. I think there is a huge opportunity in that.

Geoffrey McCormick, Consultant, TheAlloy (Brand consultants working with CIKTN): When you think about the way that the education sector leveraged opportunities like broadcast TV in the '60s and '70s with things like the Open University, you have to wonder if we are making proper use of opportunities available at the moment.

JC: When I suggested this to university researchers and lecturers, they were entirely against it. They don't like the idea of migrating away from current systems. That's the biggest barrier. A lot of trouble even comes from the word 'game'. There are connotations that are not necessarily positive. There needs to be a redefining, or at least a clearer understanding, of everything that the word means.

Other people are using games for education purposes already. If we don't, I believe that our credibility and our heritage will become less relevant.

What will the games industry look like in a decade?

JC: The future of games doesn't lie in the finished, shrink-wrapped game on the shelf. It's in casual games, online games and the like. People know this, but when you get into this area, you come across something that maybe the games industry isn't very familiar with at all. How do you manage the huge amounts of data, and in particular private data, which this generates?

There is an opportunity here. If a player has certain preferences in terms of brands or the way they like to play, I can customise that experience to their particular 'sweet-spot'. Potentially there is a huge amount of data that could be needed in order to deliver those things, and a tsunami of issues that could appear over how companies access, trade and store that kind of information.

> ***"A lot of trouble comes from the word 'game'. There are connotations that aren't positive. There needs to be a redefining of what the word means."***
>
> John Cass, Director, CIKTN

It's like the Old West in the technology industry at the moment. There are no rules, and it's international. You had all that stuff with the UAE and Saudi Arabia banning Blackberry use because data is stored outside of their jurisdiction. There aren't any clear norms, its just a lot of really implicit 'stuff'. So that is the reason for the third and final provocation. With one and two you open up a world where you actually become very responsible for very different types of relationships with your customer. They need to have a complete knowledge of exactly what it is that you are doing. There is a steep learning curve there and some people are lagging behind a bit.

GM: Privacy as a commodity is so powerful that there is a bit of fear about it, that we could be opening a can of worms to our detriment. I think it could be hugely powerful. If it is handled in the right way, if people are aware of the transaction and accept it, it is a transaction that could really benefit lives.

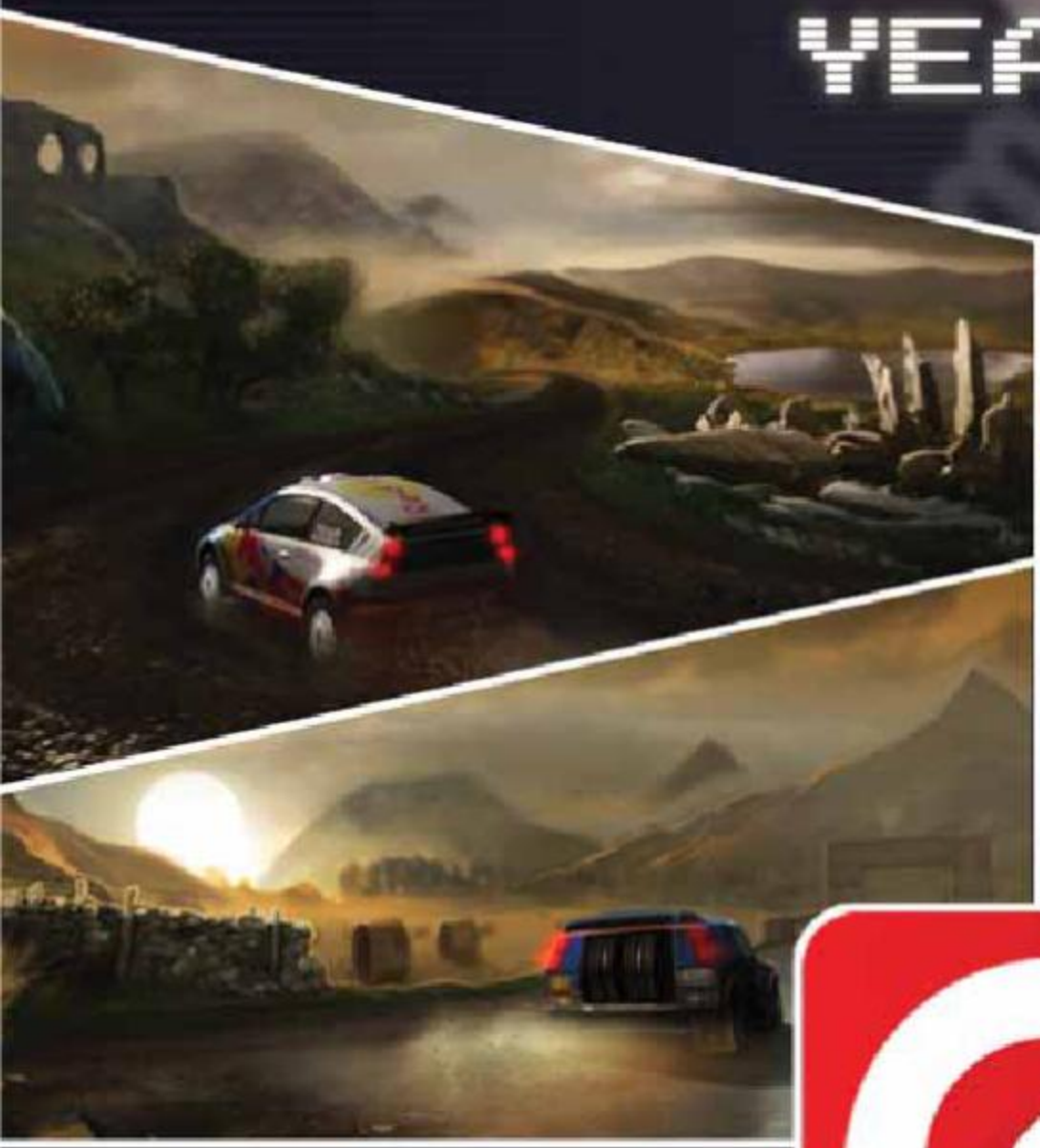
All of these things could, and should, transform the gaming industry forever.

eXient

CELEBRATES

10

YEARS



www.exient.com

BUILD

THE LATEST TOOLS NEWS, TECH UPDATES & TUTORIALS

Q&A: Cubic Motion's Gareth Edwards on facial animation in Deus Ex: Human Evolution, p60

TOOLS: Rad talks telemetry

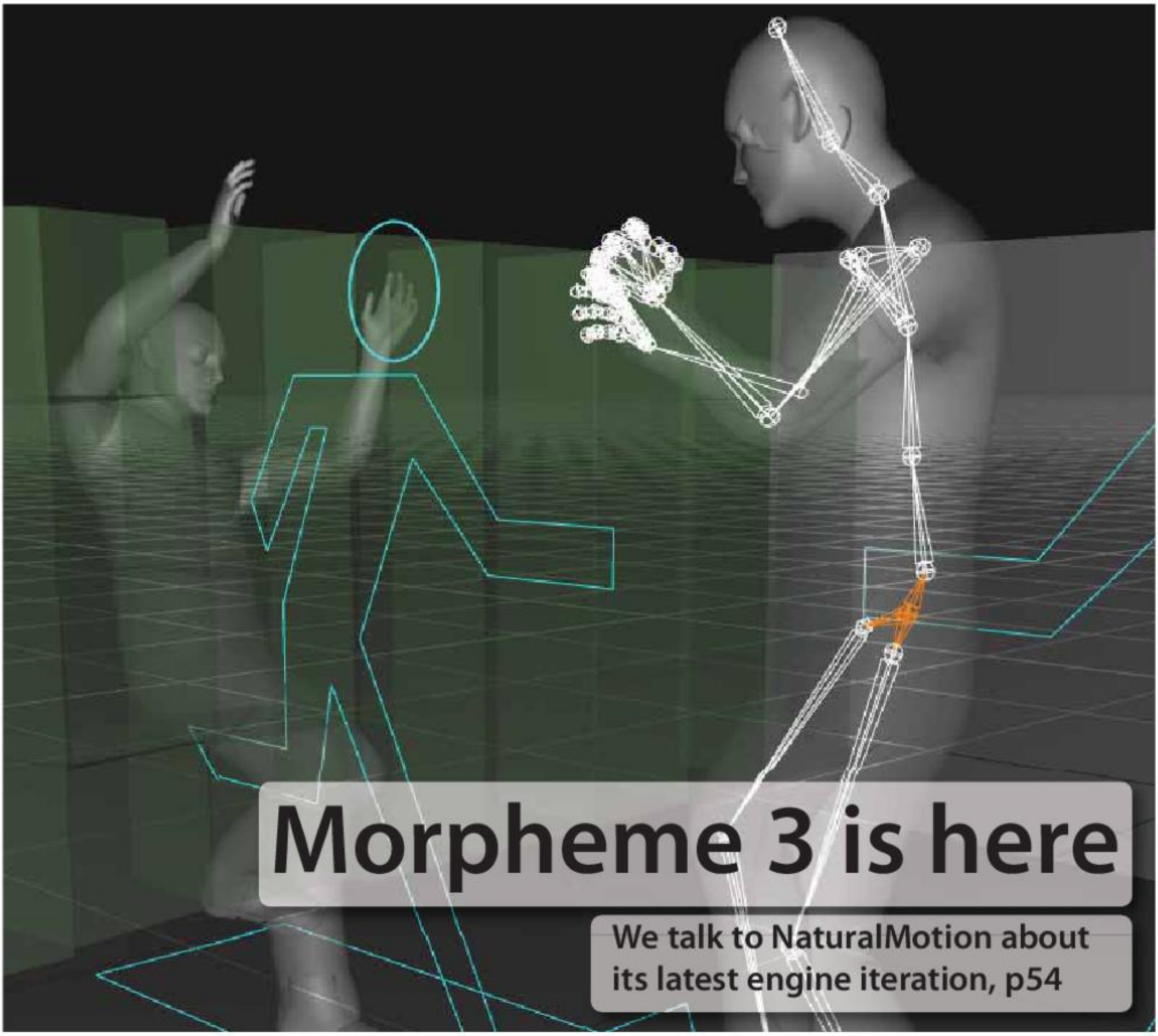
p56

TUTORIAL: Porting apps to netbook

p62

AUDIO: Making Fable's music

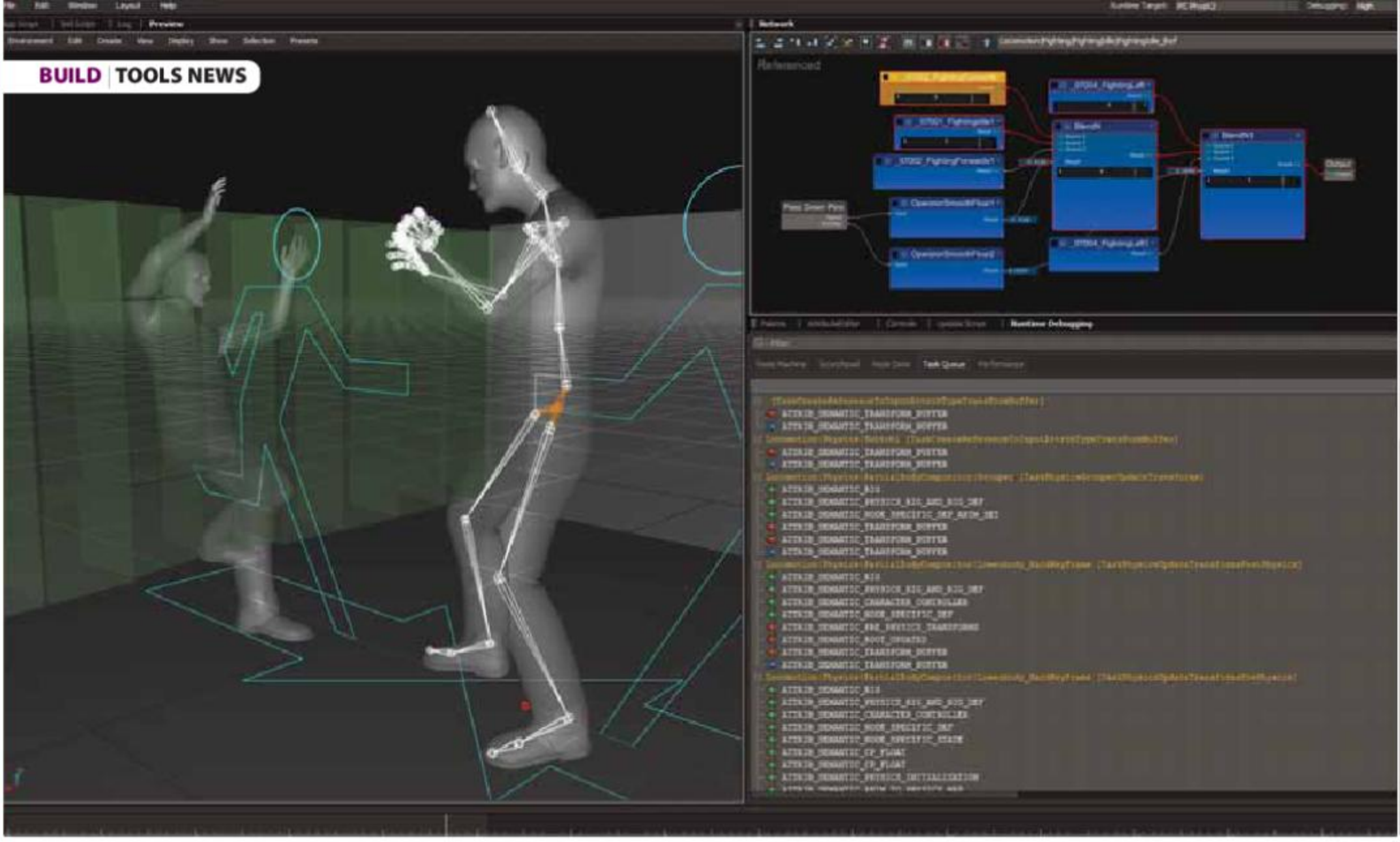
p59



Morpheme 3 is here

We talk to NaturalMotion about its latest engine iteration, p54

EPIC DIARIES: UE3's aim for multi-platform innovation, p57



NATURAL SELECTION

Following on from the release of its latest animation solution in Morpheme 3, **Will Freeman** asks NaturalMotion's CEO and CTO what the ongoing evolution of its tool will mean for animators working in the field

NaturalMotion CTO Simon Mack (above) and CEO Torsten Reil (below)

What is it about your approach that defines the improvements to this latest version of Morpheme?

Torsten Reil, CEO: Our approach for Morpheme has always been to simplify and streamline the workflow for animators using it. For Morpheme 3 we made many improvements based on feedback from our customers' use of the software in production. I think people will see straight away that there has been a clear focus on cutting out any unnecessary processes so that animators can concentrate on the creative element of their craft.

Simon Mack, CTO: We also wanted to better account for the variety of people using Morpheme in their day-to-day production work. As a core element of a game engine, Morpheme Runtime is used and extended by programmers who have always had to use Visual Studio as their debugging and analysis environment. With Morpheme 3, we've developed a range of tools specifically designed to give programmers the best insight into animation runtime directly from the Morpheme Connect editor.

What is the significance of the new previewing and prototyping functionality?

Mack: Morpheme has always had an on-target preview system that allows you to view exactly in the app what you will see in the runtime. With Morpheme 3 we've made it even easier again to attach Morpheme Connect directly to the game and make use of the debugging features whilst viewing your animation network's results as it is running live inside your game engine.

This gives you a greater visibility into how everything is holding together from an art, environment and gameplay perspective. This is a great example of how Morpheme 3 is beneficial to the whole development team.

> ***"There has been a focus on cutting out any unnecessary processes so that animators can concentrate on the creative element of their craft."***
>
> Torsten Reil, NaturalMotion

Of course, you also want to be able to test as much as possible of your animation system without the complexity of the rest of the game engine around it. To address that issue, in Morpheme 3 it's now possible to preview and prototype the interactions between multiple characters directly in the authoring environment.

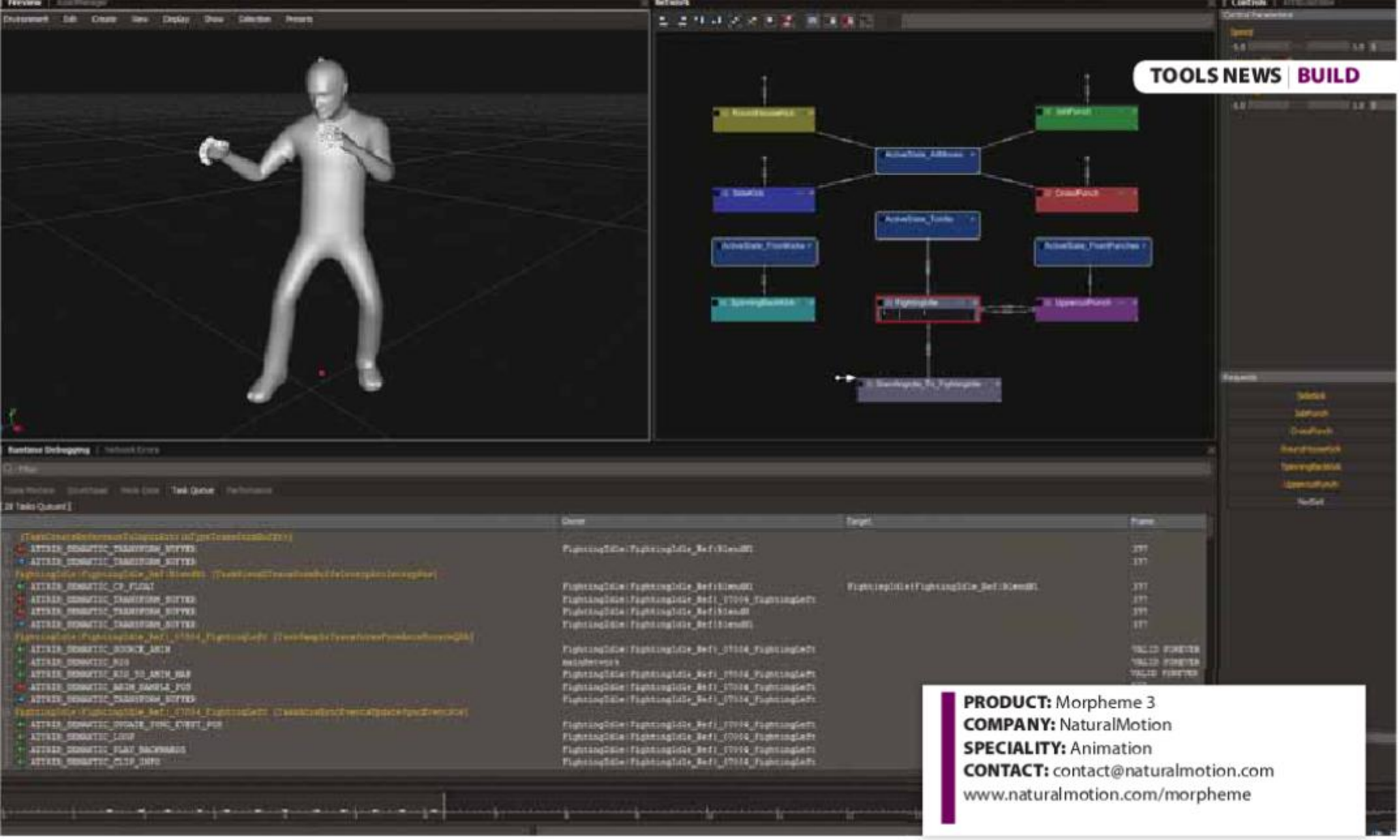
And what does the new asset management system mean for Morpheme 3 users?

Mack: Our development of the asset management system was driven by customer experience. We understand that studios organise their animation data in many ways. Whether they sort by type or character, our new system imposes no restrictions or requirements on their organisation and also allows people to rapidly locate and preview their animations.

What other features stand out as highlights of Morpheme 3?

Mack: We're especially pleased with our runtime debugging. This feature enables you to see, frame by frame, what exactly is being executed in the runtime. It helps programmers – when they are customising the system and creating their own nodes and extensions – to see just how they are affecting the operation of the system and how data flows through the animation network. It's going to prove especially useful in the final stages of optimisation when trying to squeeze that last bit of performance out of the hardware. In addition, debugging sessions can be saved and reloaded even without a connection to the game, helping teams work together to review issues with networks simply and efficiently.

We've also made changes to the state machines and rules of node connections. This



PRODUCT: Morpheme 3
COMPANY: NaturalMotion
SPECIALITY: Animation
CONTACT: contact@naturalmotion.com
www.naturalmotion.com/morpheme

DEDICATED FOLLOWERS

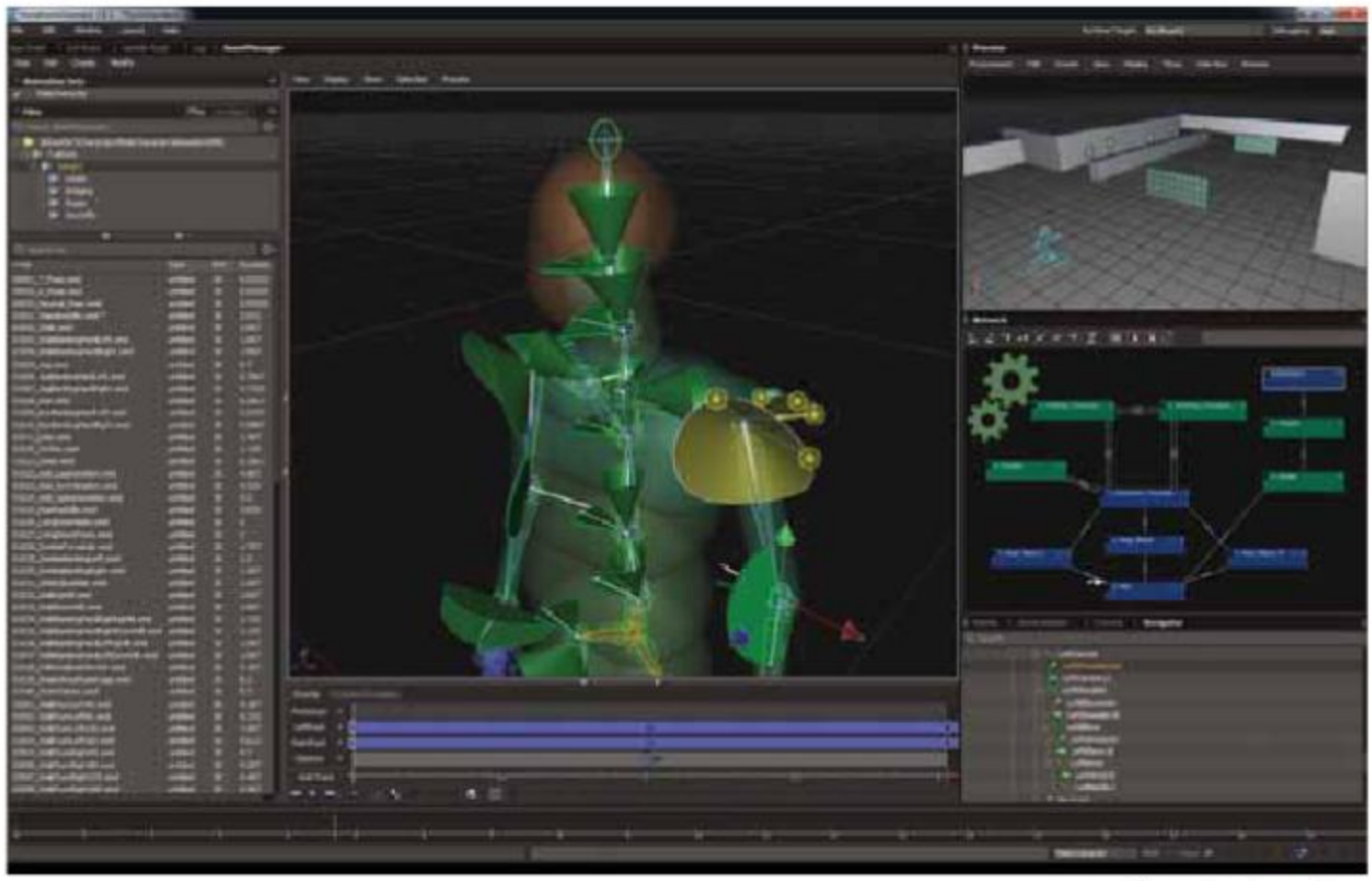
Throughout the development of Morpheme 3 the NaturalMotion team kept a close eye on the trends they believe will shape the future of video game animation.

In particular they observed an ongoing pattern for higher levels of animation data, raising consumer expectation with regard to animation, and larger development teams.

"Game development budgets have grown and customer expectation is higher than ever," explains NaturalMotion CEO Tortsen Reil. "You can't get away with a pretty game engine covering the cracks of poor quality animation."

Morpheme 3 addresses this by letting developers and programmers author and visualise very large quantities of data, through faster export times, a better asset manager, and though graphical tools like dynamic event visualisation.

"Morpheme also lets larger teams work together through providing a common tool and language, and through specific features like network referencing and saving and loading debug sessions," adds Reil. "The latter even lets the QA team identify issues, save a snapshot, and then send it straight to the animator. It may not be the sexiest feature – but it is very useful in production."



Above: Morpheme 3 offers animators a simplified, streamlined workflow

is one of those cases where something hugely important isn't necessarily something you want to shout about as a 'key feature', but it will certainly dramatically improve the user experience.

Animators will be able to create networks that are much simpler in structure than before, but provide the same high quality effects. This provides a huge boost to productivity and clarity.

What inspired the move to make Morpheme more customisable?

Mack: Morpheme has always been customisable and that is a core driver behind the design of the product. Our policy is to supply source code for the runtime so clients can build custom nodes to implement special blending techniques or IK algorithms, for example. For Morpheme 3 we made this process more accessible with the addition of the Node Wizard, which auto-generates much of the code required and allows programmers to focus on solving their particular problem.

In a fundamental way, how will Morpheme 3 improve the animation of its users?

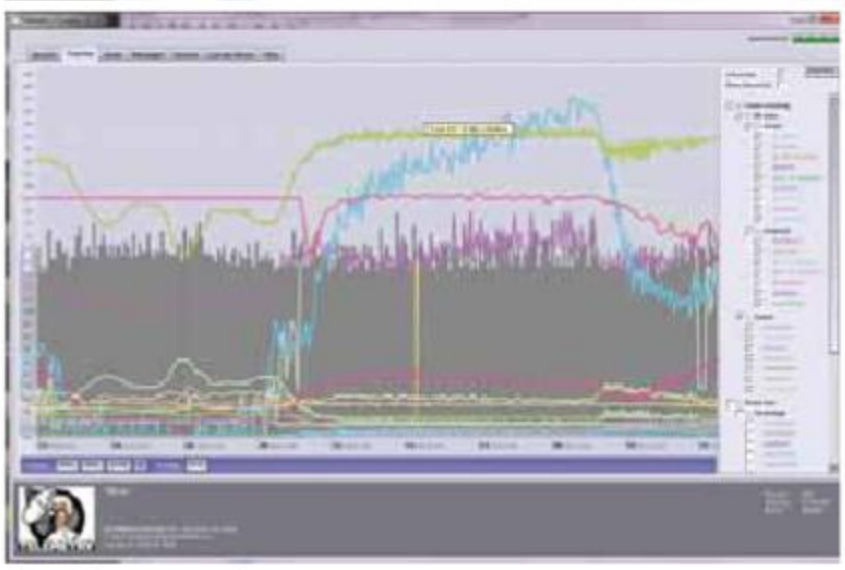
Reil: Essentially, Morpheme helps people work better and lets them get to the level of animation quality they see in their mind's eye far quicker than before.

In our experience, many very good animators get bogged down with the complexities of authoring what they're trying to achieve. Morpheme 3 solves that.

KEY RELEASE

Will Freeman looks at RAD Game Tools' Telemetry profiling toolkit

What is it? A programmer-driven profiling system with an emphasis on visualisation
Company: RAD Game Tools
Price: Via email (sales3@radgametools.com)
www.radgametools.com



Above: Telemetry at work, and (right) Telemetry's chief developer Brian Hook

RAD Game Tools' new toolkit Telemetry is a programmer-driven system for profiling and visualising real-time application performance.

While most profiling systems today use a sample-based mechanism, Telemetry, which is at the time of writing available for PC with console versions imminent, relies on the programmer to direct its measurements with mark-ups, giving it a significant advantage over many parallel solutions.

"This gives the programmer very focused information about what's taking a long time, where, and even why based on surrounding context," explains Telemetry's chief developer Brian Hook. "And it also means we can take many more readings-per-second than a sampling profiler."

Telemetry, insists Hook, also promises to outperform other profiling systems by showing information 'over time': "This is a crucial advantage over seeing an aggregate summary of events for an entire duration. Practically speaking this means you can find spikes in performance, not just areas that 'on average' took a long time but which may actually be fast frame-to-frame."

ABOUT TIME

Another string to RAD's profiling bow is its ability to display all gathered data on the same timeline, allowing users to reconcile vastly different types of data. Such a function enables developers to see, for example, dumped out custom game data, along with thread locking data, OS context switches, memory allocation and function times, all along the same timeline.

In fact, visualisation is pitched as one of Telemetry's key strengths.

According to Hook, gaining a clear visualisation of data is paramount to understanding what a given game is really doing: "Having code unfold into visual representations of execution really helps programmers identify problem areas in terms of performance, thread interactions, and memory usage.

> ***"Having code unfold into visual representations of execution really helps programmers identify problem areas in terms of performance."***
>
> Brian Hook, RAD

"Many customers find significant problems within their first hour of using Telemetry; often problems they were unaware of or had an intuitive feel about but no real evidence to help track it down."

Furthermore, Telemetry uses a client/server architecture, so information can stream to a single repository for analysis by others.

A SENSE OF SCALE

Developing the tech hasn't been without challenges, of course, but those hurdles are the very things that have defined the development of Telemetry into what it is today, according to Hook.

"The biggest challenge has been scalability," he admits. "One customer will want tens of thousands of profile zones, another is dumping GBs of logging messages, while another will send millions of samples of user data. So the largest challenge has just been making all this data gather and visualise quickly, when there isn't one 'right' way to use it."

Having met that challenge and moved the PC-focused product out of beta, the next step for the RAD team working on Telemetry is to take final versions of the toolkit to console: "As with any multiplatform programming task, each platform presents its own unique challenges," confirms Hook. "Obviously there will be differences and caveats with how we support each platform's idiosyncrasies.

"For example, lower powered platforms may not have the networking bandwidth or CPU horsepower to generate as much data as a PC version."

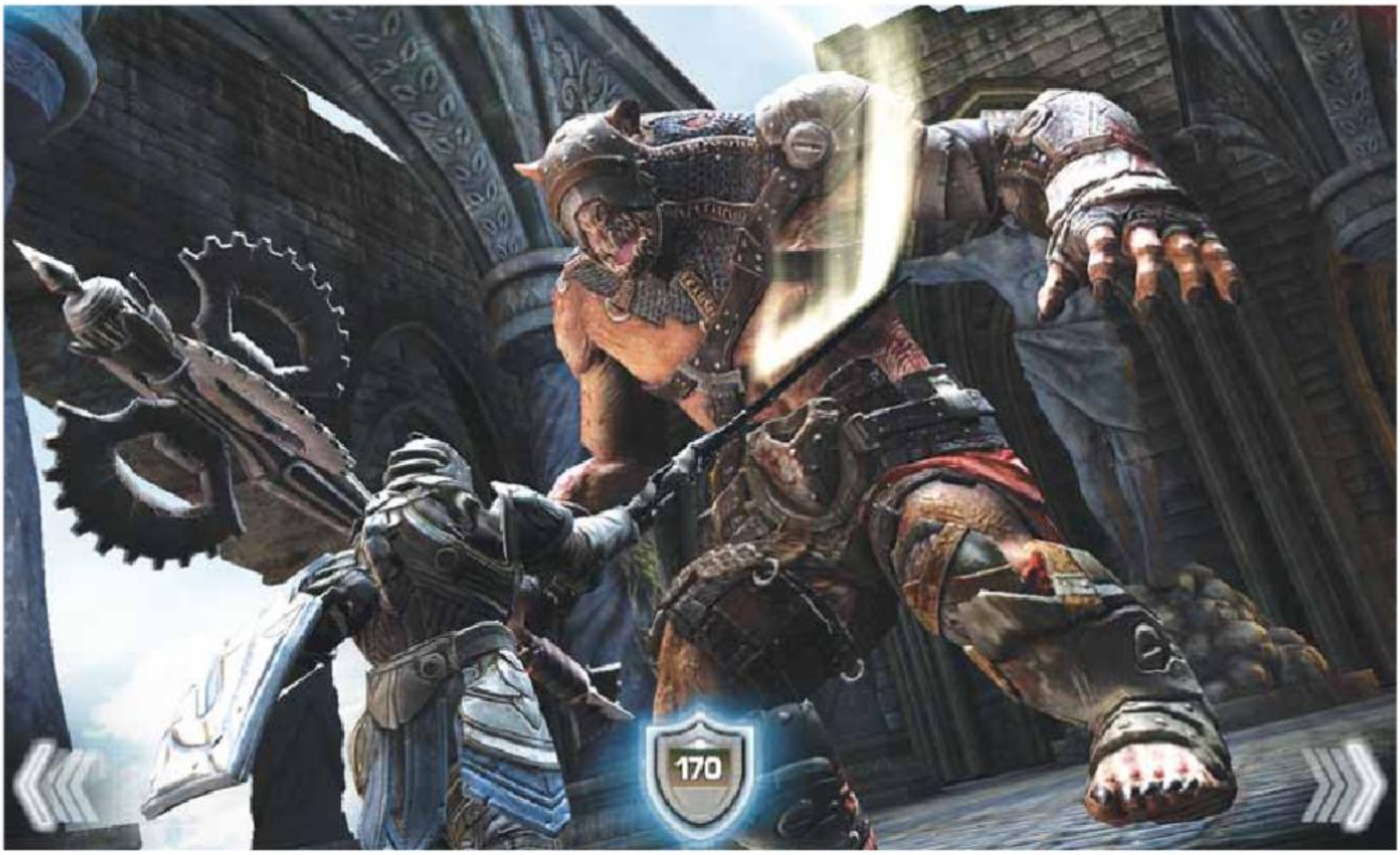
Despite the mammoth task of embracing the console developer community, RAD aims to be source and binary compatible across platforms as much as possible so that users can just recompile and go.

With the Xbox 360 version set for release imminently at the time of writing, and the PS3 build due for Spring this year, In the coming months Telemetry may become a very familiar piece of equipment in developer's toolboxes.

EPIC DIARIES

From mobile to motion, Unreal Engine 3 powers new experiences

Unreal Engine and Unreal Development Kit
Developer: Epic
Released: Out now
www.unrealtechnology.com



Above: Chair's groundbreaking Infinity Blade, which points to a new era of iOS games

OVER THE past year, Unreal Engine 3 has continued to power some of the best titles in the industry and produce success stories for the developers behind them across a wide range of genres and sizes.

In addition, we've released Unreal Engine 3 for mobile, showing it onstage at the Apple Special Event in September with an introduction by Steve Jobs himself.

Jobs called it "remarkable," and one journalist's reaction was to declare "everything's just changed," which I think sums it up pretty well.

With more than 1.5 million downloads in the iTunes App Store, the reaction to our *Epic Citade*l demo shows that people are enthralled by the kind of experiences that Unreal Engine 3 will soon be powering on mobile platforms.

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

Our recent release of Unreal Development Kit with iOS support opens up free access to our toolset to anyone looking to create iOS games, and Chair's recently launched *Infinity Blade* is just one more example of what can be achieved with UE3 on handheld devices. But mobile isn't the whole story.

We're powering motion gaming. Microsoft's Kinect is already enjoying wide acclaim and early success. *Kinect Adventures*, the game that comes with every Kinect sensor, is powered by Unreal Engine 3. We're on PlayStation Move as well. In their E3 keynote, Sony revealed *Sorcery*, a stunning first-party move title coming this year. Additional groundbreaking motion titles are in development using UE3 as I write this.

BETTER AND BETTER

This year, we also added Scaleform GFx, the world's leading user interface technology, and the full package comes free with UE3. Scaleform has an awesome UE3-based in-the-world 3D interface demo you've got to see for yourself.

Speaking of 3D, at various tradeshows we have been showing stereoscopic 3D on PC, Xbox 360 and PS3, and even auto-stereoscopic 3D on a prototype Android mobile device powered by NVIDIA's Tegra 2 hardware. *Batman: Arkham Asylum - Game of the Year Edition* shipped in stereoscopic 3D on Xbox 360, PS3 and PC with support from Darkworks' TriOviz technology, which has now joined our Integrated Partners Program.

Keep an eye out for several big 3D titles powered by UE3, including Disney's upcoming *Tron: Evolution* and the next *Mortal Kombat* title, both of which had great 3D showings at E3.

There's so much more to talk about, but the bottom line is that regardless of your genre or budget, if you're looking for the best game engine technology across PC, console and mobile platforms, then we should talk. You'll find that our door is always open.

UPCOMING EPIC ATTENDED EVENTS:

DICE Summit
Las Vegas
February 9th – 11th, 2011

GDC
San Francisco
February 28th – March 4th, 2011

Please email: ***mrein@epicgames.com*** *for appointments.*

To discuss anything raised in this column or general licensing opportunities for Epic Games' *Unreal* engine, contact: **mrein@epicgames.com**

FOR RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITIES PLEASE VISIT:
www.epicgames.com/epic_jobs.html

Canadian-born **Mark Rein** is vice president and co-founder of Epic Games based in Cary, North Carolina. Epic's Unreal Engine 3 has won Game Developer magazine's Best Engine Front Line Award four times along with entry into the Hall of Fame. UE3 has won three consecutive Develop Industry Excellence Awards. Epic is the creator of the mega-hit Unreal series of games and the blockbuster Gears of War franchise. Follow @MarkRein on Twitter.

UNITY FOCUS

Will Freeman talks to the Minor Studios team about creating Atmosphir

ATMOSPHIR
Developer: Minor Studio
Platform: PC
Genre: UGC adventure game
www.atmosphir.com

Above right: Impressive examples of Atmosphir UGC, and (above) Minor Studios CEO Martin Repetto

IN DEVELOPING *Atmosphir*, Minor Studios has delivered one of the most impressive creations yet to be built using the ever-popular Unity engine.

The UGC-focused game is in fact a platform that lets players design and build ambitious interactive worlds themselves in browser. The results of the consumers toil are remarkably impressive; more polished than *Minecraft* levels, and more professional than many developers would like to admit.

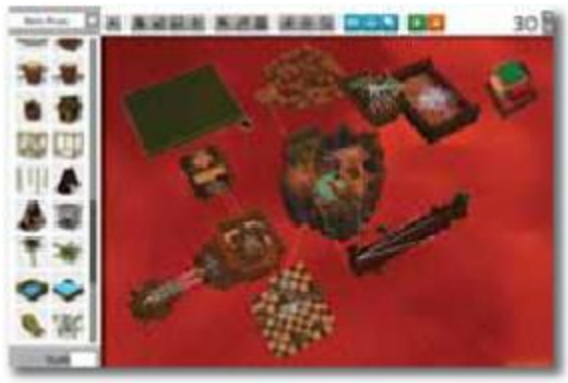
Atmosphir, which lets users share one another's handiwork through a thriving community, started life at Beta as a software download. However, in 2009, Minor Studios decided to move the project to Unity, having reached a fork in the road of progress where VC money either needed to be dedicated to a team large enough to handle both proprietary tech and game design, or more directly to *Atmosphir*. The outfit based in both the US and Argentina opted to go with leveraging existing technology.

"Before I'd spent a lot of time with all the big engines, but I'd had very little experience with Unity," admits Martin Repetto, Minor Studios CEO. "It started with the prototyping, which was amazing. The heart and sole of *Atmosphir* is the editor; the tool that lets our player build things. We prototyped that in a weekend in Unity. That was fantastic.

"We added multiplayer on Monday, we added normal maps and shaders on Tuesday, and on Wednesday we had a board meeting and decided to go to Unity. Five month's later we'd ported the full game."

GAME DEV STORY

The speed of working with the engine certainly impressed Repetto and creative director Dave Werner, but it was something closer to the core ideals of the Unity methodology that made the engine ideal for building a UGC title.



> ***"We have a lot of ideas about what players can do with Atmosphir in the future, and I think that with Unity it will be easy."***
> Dave Werner, Minor Studios

Minor Studios' creative director Dave Werner

"Unity CEO David Helgason always talks about the democratisation of game development, and wanting to enable all developers to make their own games," explains Repetto. "With *Atmosphir* what we want to do is do the same thing for any average Joe; we want to let them build their own game. With *Atmosphir* we've taken Unity, which extremely easy to use, and simplified it for our editor. We're simplifying the tools that are already built in Unity, and making that the game."

To an extent, *Atmosphir* is the game that lets you play at being a Unity developer. Quite simply, the engine's accessible structure translated perfectly into being the foundation of a title that lets the consumer build the game.

UGC SET FREE

Unity has also allowed players far greater creative freedom, as Werner explains: "The old *Atmosphir* editor just had a set grid that let players stack blocks. Unity means players can now rescale, free place and free rotate blocks. To me, the biggest upgrade in moving to Unity was the addition of gravity effects. You really could make a *Super Mario Galaxy* style level in Atmosphir. People are using that in really amazing and interesting ways.

"Right now we're really letting players build adventure games inspired by *Zelda* and *Mario*, but that's not to say we won't want things to be re-skinned in the future.

"We have a lot of ideas about what players can do with the world of *Atmosphir* in the future, and I think that with Unity it will be easy to do. It's just a matter of switching assets and a few graphics and it will be ready to go."

HEARD ABOUT

John Broomhall talks to Lionhead's music director about the Fable sound

FABLE SERIES
Developer: Lionhead
Release Date: 2004 - present
Platform: PC, Xbox, Xbox 360, Smartphone
www.lionhead.com

The audio backdrop to the Fable series is perinially popular with fans of the games

THE now famed *Fable* franchise deservedly provides Russell Shaw a lofty and enviable position amid the starry firmament of triple-A video game composers.

Bucking the usual music outsourcing model, he's a salaried staffer who both defines the game's music requirements, and personally fulfills them – able to work from concepts and initial ideas at the very earliest stages of the project.

"I'm extremely lucky – I've been with Peter Molyneux for 20 years now and he virtually gives me *carte blanche*," says Shaw. "Having his trust really is a privilege. That said, the popularity of the original *Fable* music is a guiding hand - and sometimes a rod for my back.

"Anything that deviates too far from the fundamental ethos of *Fable 1* is considered blasphemy. On *Fable II*, I took a more musically atmospheric, ambient approach, but with *Fable III*, I've opted for a balance of the two returning to the basic use of the orchestra. It definitely brings out the *Fable* memories and the blend works – and hopefully it satisfies those fans of the series who contact our message boards asking for more 'tunes'."

THE DEEP END

The first *Fable* was in fact Shaw's first orchestral score using live players – and something of a baptism of fire, as he explains: "Suddenly I was working with A-grade Hollywood composer, Danny Elfman, who created the main theme for me, which I then developed for the in-game score. I was thrown into the middle of it all and feel lucky that it came out so well."

Such refreshing and endearing humility belies the fact that Shaw clearly has a singular talent. "I've always been a great admirer of people who write beautiful music – it's always shaped my composition," he states. "It might sound 'airy-fairy' but I'm always looking for that magical beauty. Working with Danny's theme – the maestro of themes – was an amazing starting point. When you look at peoples' favourite music from *Fable* – it's all the magical fairytale tunes."

> ***"I've been with Peter Molyneux for 20 years now and he virtually gives me carte blanche. Having his trust really is a privilege."***
> Russell Shaw, Lionhead

By the time *Fable III* came around, Shaw was way up the learning curve when it came to orchestration prowess. The music director used periods between projects to research combinations to produce various musical textures and colours – with orchestrator and conductor Allan Wilson as trusted advisor.

WELL COMPOSED

Final composition for *Fable III* took place over 12 weeks, followed by an eight-week period spent generally tidying and tweaking, taking account of last minute design changes and undertaking full preparation for the red light. Sophisticated placeholder 'mock-ups' were created using Vienna and Reason instrument libraries. Meanwhile, Wilson was given a midifile, mp3 reference and a score printed from Cubase to kick-off his preparation process for conducting duties.

The final orchestral recording took place in eight sessions across four days in Bratislava before the team headed to Pinewood for choir recording and mixing, as Shaw explains: "As ever, the recording was an incredible experience – four months after I was pushing a key on a keyboard hearing a digital string sample through my Adams speakers, there was Allan waving his baton and 80 musicians were playing my music, adding all their wonderful expression and emotion.

"Mixing took place over three days – it's quite a quick process, partly because engineer Pete Fuchs – whose ears I trust 100 per cent – likes to work that way, and partly because by this stage the tracks kind of mix themselves. They'd already been balanced, so it was largely a question of high quality reverbs and sweetening. Back at my own studio, I added some digital compression to make sure everything sat well together."

In-game playback is straightforward triggering of cues, apart from the more 'interactive' combat music which, at run-time, selects and combines from seven interleaved stems to create variation and increasing intensity to reflect the gameplay experience. Although the core composition comprised approximately 60 minutes of music, this material was intelligently re-purposed to create a final count of around three hours' worth of score – utilising various orchestral layers recorded separately for each piece as the basis for 'alt' versions – for example used when a player re-visits a part of the gameworld later in the story.

Above: Lionhead's music director Russell Shaw

John Broomhall is an independent Audio Director, Consultant & Content Provider.
E: develop@johnbroomhall.co.uk
www.johnbroomhall.co.uk

The Cubic Route

Facial Animation specialist Cubic Motion has been working on the significantly hyped Deus Ex: Human Revolution with Eidos Montréal. **Will Freeman** caught up with Cubic's director Gareth Edwards to find out more...

Cubic Motion company director Gareth Edwards

What opportunities did the work on the new Deus Ex: Human Revolution afford Cubic Motion?

What we really demonstrated as a company working on *Deus Ex* was our ability to move very quickly, to take on a very large-scale production, and drop straight into a pipeline involving another studio (the excellent Goldtooth Creative) without adding any complexity to the overall process of building a great game. With enough effort it's possible for plenty of studios to produce top-flight facial animation, but that also has to be matched by speed, reliability, consistency and value for money.

How does Cubic Motion approach facial mocap with a game like Deus Ex?

We don't see ourselves as a technology vendor, rather an animation studio with a very niche specialisation – faces. Facial animation is so radically different from all other types of animation that we believe in collecting together a bunch of specialists who will spend all of their time focused on that alone.

We have no single fixed approach, and instead try to take an overall view of the right pipeline for each job. There are various capture methodologies we recommend – for example, we think video data can be more powerful than marker-based mocap in a lot of circumstances – but we'll take any type of data from a client, including mocap, video or audio, and turn it into great animation.

> ***"Facial animation is so radically different from all other types of animation that we believe in collecting together a bunch of specialists who focus on that."***
>
> Gareth Edwards, Cubic Motion

So what distinguishes Cubic Motion from others offering facial mocap services and technology?

Most of the companies we'd regard as competitors tend to advocate a particular technology approach as the best. We would argue that any approach can ultimately produce good animation. After all, you can hand-key the stuff in the extreme case. The difference with Cubic is that you won't find us selling a fixed method, rather presenting you with a range of choices.

The end result depends on a lot more than the technology – for example, we need to make sure that directors and actors are absolutely happy with the process. Given that budgets are finite, developers need the ability to step back and focus their resources appropriately. A great director and some extra days with the actors might give you more benefit than – for example – some extra

mocap cameras. I think that our pricing is very competitive indeed and hopefully leaves room in developer's budgets for all of the other elements which go towards making great game animation.

What trends are defining the future of facial mocap, and how is Cubic Motion preparing for the future in that regard?
Greater integration is really a common goal, since most developers these days like to minimise the number of steps within the production process. For example, we're now starting to see some isolated cases of audio and motion capture both being captured on the same stage, although as of right now, very few motion capture stages are also audio stages.

> ***"We need a far wider understanding of the issues that really matter in animation. As an example, in model-based animation you need to use excellent rigs."***
>
> Gareth Edwards, Cubic Motion

To be able to capture the face at the same time as the body, there are a growing number of head-mounted cameras available. I think that a particular trend over the next two years will be live or near-live driving of facial animation, at least for pre-visualisation, which will then allow directors to sign-off performance on the day rather than wait for results after the actors have all packed up and gone home. Cubic Motion is currently developing a real-time system, partly supported by a research grant from the NWDA. We intend to launch the first beta of this in April and are excited to see how it ends up working for our clients.

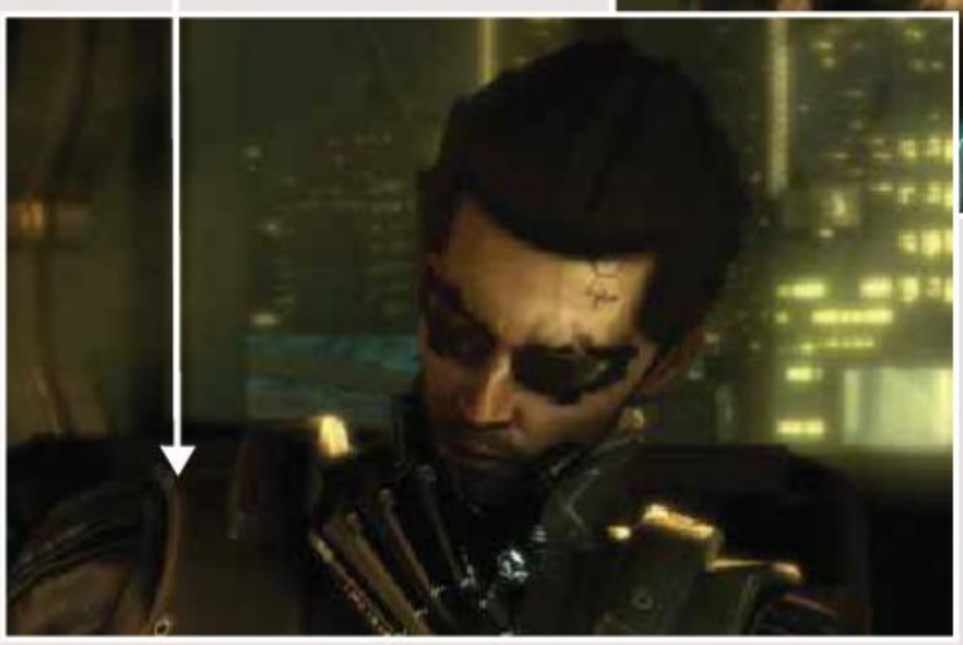
What challenges remain in the facial motion capture discipline? How can they be overcome?
I think that we need to have a far wider understanding of the issues that really matter in animation. As an example, in traditional model-based animation – as opposed to vertex driving – you need to be using excellent rigs. You can have the most sophisticated motion capture stage in the whole world, but if the rig that you're using is flaky, the results will always be poor.

We're working on new tools and technology to speed up the process of creating great rigs for game developers, and this will remain a very active field of research elsewhere. As mentioned earlier, we need better systems for capturing data simultaneously, but in the mean time, if you have to choose, then one thing I'm very keen to get across is that capturing the face at the same time as audio is more important than capturing face and body together. Face and voice are far more sensitive to the tiny sync errors than face and body are.

SHOWING FACE

Eidos Montréal's producer David Anfossi annotates a Human Revolution screenshot to show where Cubic Motion helped out

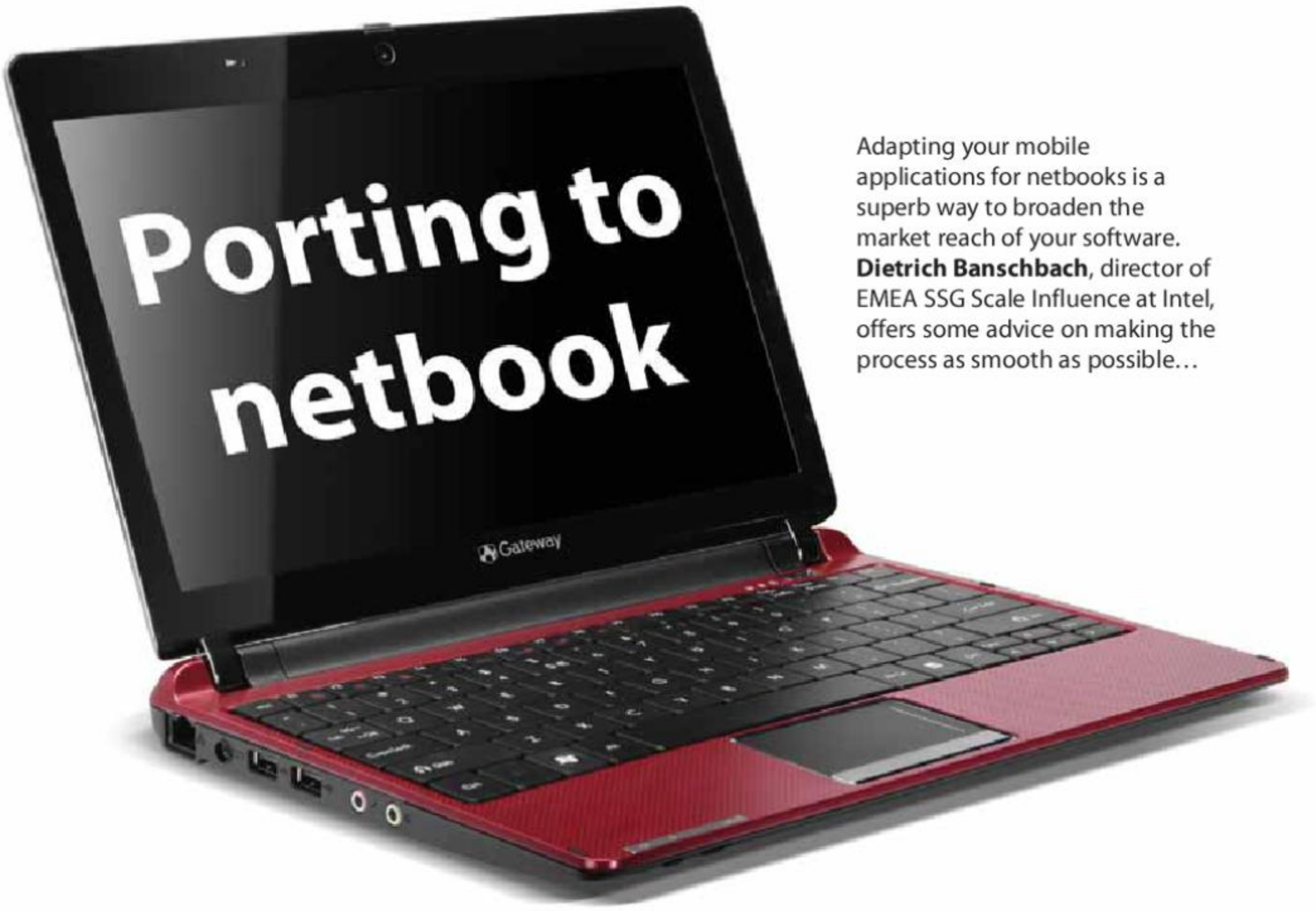
- Immersion is a very important aspect of *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* and it's easy to break it if not pay attention to detail. This is why facial animation in real time and pre-rendered have been the focus of our attention. It was really important for us to work with a studio with experience, which we found with Cubic Motion.
- Adam Jensen, the main character, plays a crucial role in terms of the emotions being conveyed to the player, and Cubic Motion has helped us accurately capture the actors' work for the facial animation.



- Working with Cubic Motion on facial capture is very simple and requires no special equipment.
- We also found that time between capture and delivery of data was relatively short, delivering these fantastic results.

Deus Ex: Human Revolution producer David Anfossi has over 12 years experience in industry management and has worked on more than 70 titles
E: Info@eidosmontreal.com

Porting to netbook



Adapting your mobile applications for netbooks is a superb way to broaden the market reach of your software. **Dietrich Banschbach**, director of EMEA SSG Scale Influence at Intel, offers some advice on making the process as smooth as possible…

Above: Intel's Dietrich Banschbach believes there is a huge potential market in netbook apps

WHILE SOME handheld devices hog the headlines, the unassuming netbook ambles along in the background, selling steadily and building its army of fans.

What the netbook lacks in glamour, it more than makes up for in utility. Its real keyboard and Windows compatibility make it ideal for those who want to work on the move, or anyone who wants to curl up on the sofa with a second computer. ABI Research estimated there will have been 58 million netbooks sold last year alone, which represents a massive potential market for software developers.

Reaching that market is easier than ever. If the netbook has learned one trick from Apple, it's that the App Store model works. It has transformed its software market, making it possible for bedroom coders to compete on the same terms as major software houses.

For users, the App Store makes it simple to find and install new applications, with confidence that the device manufacturer has vetted the software. It's less hassle than buying and installing shop-bought products, and it's less risky than downloading software from the internet.

For developers, getting boxed product into high street game shops bordered on the impossible, unless the game was backed with a massive advertising budget. Getting an app into an app store is relatively easy.

Asus announced that its new netbooks would ship with the Asus App Store starting back in autumn 2010, and other vendors are expected to follow suit. To reap early mover advantages, developers should plan now to port their apps to the netbook. Depending on the device you're porting from, the first consideration will be how the user experience on a netbook differs.

> ***"Reaching the netbook market is easier than ever. If the netbook has learned one trick from Apple, it is that the App Store model works."***
>
> Dietrich Banschbach, Intel

Applications on the iPhone, for example, use multiple small steps because that's the most efficient way to navigate the small screen. On a netbook, the larger screen size makes it possible to lay out a much wider range of options, and so dramatically cut the number of steps required to accomplish something.

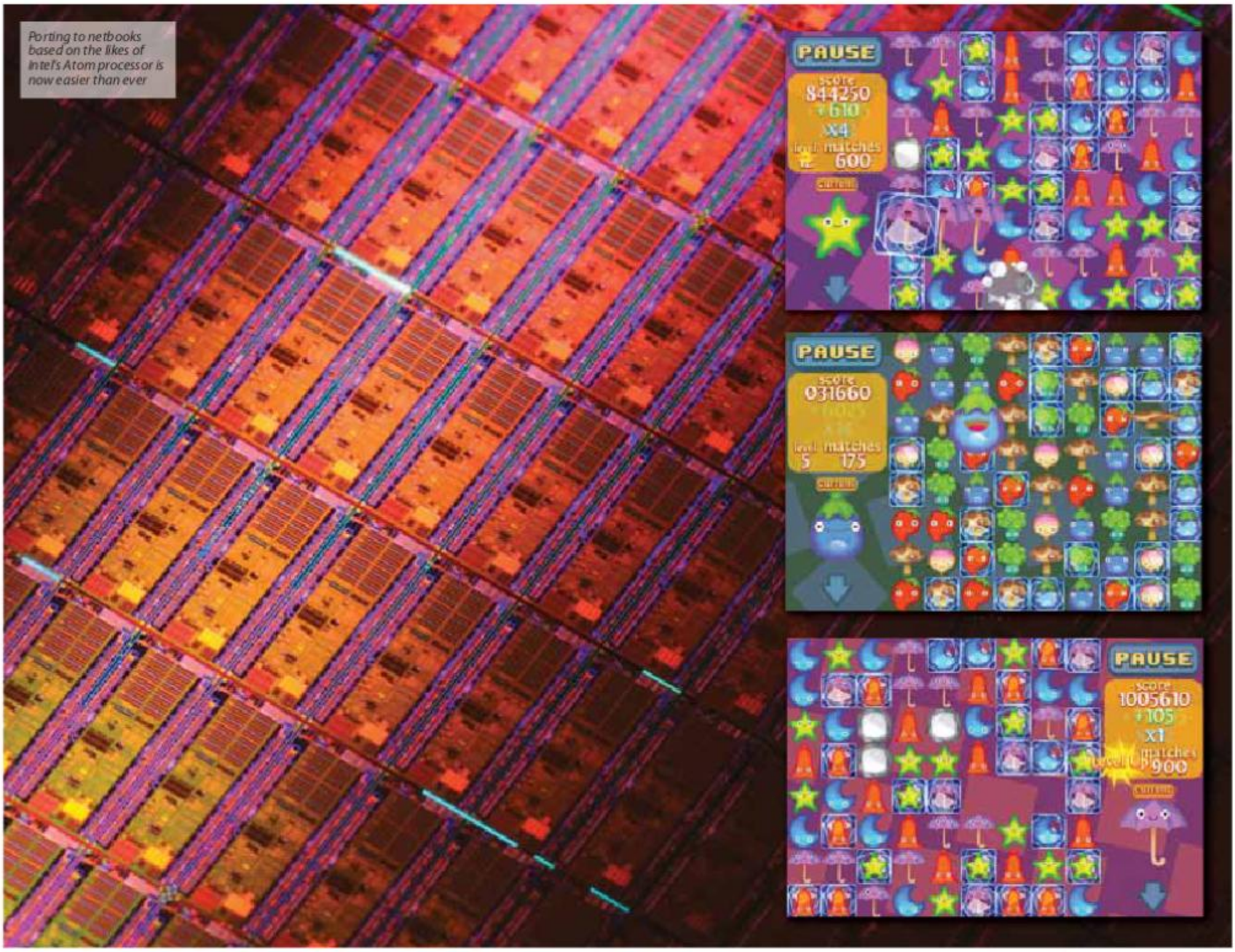
The typical netbook may not have a touch screen or accelerometer, so new zoom and rotate controls might need to be coded for the netbook if the app requires those features. Every netbook is likely to have a touchpad or mouse, though, so it should be relatively easy to adapt touch-based pointing and selecting.

A CASE IN POINT

Because the mouse pointer can appear on top of things without selecting them (it can 'hover,' in the jargon), the mouse button needs to be used to confirm a selection. Most of these adaptations will be relatively easy, but in the case of an action game that uses rapid touch controls, it might be better to consider alternative interfaces such as the keyboard.

Netbooks come in a range of different screen sizes, typically between 9" and 10.2". Earlier netbooks had 7" screens, but these are becoming much less common now. The typical screen resolution is 1024 by 600. If your graphic assets were created for a smaller platform, you might need to recreate them to achieve the desired quality. For future applications, it's a good idea to create larger assets than you need and to scale them where appropriate for smaller formats.

The UI elements should be scaled to take account of the available space, but with



minimum sizes imposed to protect usability. Mike Kasprzak, CEO of Sykhronics, converted his iPhone app *Smiles* to the netbook. He recommends programmers scale their graphics using 3D hardware, even when the visuals do not need the third dimension.

"Everything is 3D-accelerated, these days," he said. "If you're not using it, it's just performance going to waste."

Where the aspect ratio differs between the source device and the netbook, he suggests using a tiled background to fill in any blank space on the netbook screen.

Moving code from the iPhone to the netbook will require code modification, although it is not too big a leap to move from Objective C to C++. If you already have a desktop PC application that runs on C++ or another environment in x86 Windows, you should be able to move your app across with minimal modification to take account of the different hardware features. If your app runs in Flash, you can port your app easily because the Flash player also runs on netbooks.

If you're porting your app from a desktop computer, the screen is likely to be smaller than you are used to. There isn't usually room for applications to be comfortably used side by side on a netbook, so you should plan for your app to run full screen. Not only does this maximise the space available for the interface and content, but it also delivers performance improvements in Vista and Windows 7.

Any icons in the app should be positioned relatively, rather than hardcoded to a particular point on the screen. The availability of mouse hover means that minimal icons can be shown, with tooltips displayed when the mouse floats over them.

> ***"Moving code from the iPhone to the netbook will require code modification, although it is not too big a leap to move from Objective C to C++."***
>
> Dietrich Banschbach, Intel

SPLITING THE ATOM

To achieve the best possible performance, it's a good idea to learn a little about what goes on under the hood too.

The Intel Atom Processor enables up to two threads using Hyper-Threading Technology and supports SSE3 for fast floating point maths.

Instructions are processed in order, which can result in load stalls if the application is not optimised, slowing down app performance. Using some simple flags in the Intel Compiler (/QxL /QxSSE3_ATOM), it is possible to automatically optimise the code for Atom. This has achieved a speedup of 1.3 times on one graphics-intensive demonstration program. Games that already support threading and SSE will run with excellent performance on the netbook.

The netbook presents new creative opportunities too. You're almost guaranteed to have a good camera and a microphone, and the technology and usage model means that the netbook is usually connected. Wi-Fi and Bluetooth come as standard, and WiMax is available on some models. Battery life can be as long as ten hours, making more immersive games and applications possible, as well as the more casual apps that users might want to dip in and out of.

Porting applications to the netbook is a great way to broaden the market reach of your software. The most successful apps, though, might prove to be previously undreamed-of applications that make the best use of the available hardware, and the usage model of computing while connected and on the move.

www.intel.com

Above: Sykhronics' ported its iPhone puzzler Smiles to netbook, and recommends scaling even 2D graphics with 3D graphics hardware

Europe's only news service solely for games developers

Free app available now from iTunes

Made for iPhone

Available on the App Store

DIRECTORY

The world's premier listing of games development studios, tools, outsourcing specialists, services and courses...

STUDIOS:
Playground picks up Codemasters talent
p66

TOOLS:
DeNA social platform moves on Android
p68

SERVICES:
Mixamo signs up with GamersFirst for APB reboot
p69

KEY CONTACTS

STUDIOS

Blitz Games Studios	+44 (0) 1926 880 000
Creative Assembly	www.creative-assembly.com
Epic Games	+1 919 870 1516
Stainless Games	jobs@stainlessgames.com

TOOLS

Fork Particle	1(925) 417 1785
Stonetrip	www.stonetrip.com

SERVICES

Ian Livingstone	+44 (0) 1483 421 491
KPM	+44 (0) 203 059 3061
Matinee	01189 584 934
Partnertrans	+44 (0) 1273 229030
Universally Speaking	+44 (0) 1480 210 621

COURSES

Brunel University	www.gamesatbrunel.com
City Interactive	resumes@city-interactive.com
University of Hull	+44 (0) 1482 465 951

RATES
1/4 page: £450 (or £200/month if booked for a minimum of six months)

Alex.Boucher@**intentmedia.co.uk**

T: 01992 535 647

Studio News

This month: Playground Games, Lightning Fish, Tequila Works and Riot Games

Adam Askew and Alan Roberts have joined Leamington Spa, UK-based **Playground Games**.

Askew (*pictured far right*) has joined Playground as senior producer after ten years spent at Codemasters in a variety of roles. He was lead programmer on *Colin McRae: Dirt*, lead graphics programmer on *Race Driver: Grid* and most recently worked as producer on *Colin McRae: Dirt 2*. He has now joined Playground to work on an as yet unannounced project.

"Adam is a hugely talented all-rounder whose skills and experience will greatly benefit Playground as we embark on our new project," commented the studio's director Gavin Raeburn.

Roberts (*pictured left*) joins Playground as technical director, also after a decade at Codemasters. He has spent his entire career working on top quality racing titles, holding the position of lead programmer on *TOCA Race Driver 3* and *Race Driver: Grid* and being instrumental in starting *F1 2010* in Codemasters' Birmingham studio. He joins Playground to oversee the company's engineering team as they develop technology for a new title.

"Alan's track record in racing is exceptional and we're delighted that he's on board with us at this exciting time," Raeburn said.

Husband and wife team Arthur and Sharon Price have both joined the Oxford, UK-based studio **Lightning Fish Games**.

Arthur is an artist, user interface designer and user experience evangelist, and has been working in the creative and design fields since 1996. He finally made the leap to the games industry in 2006 and joined Free Radical Design as an environment artist and user interface designer.

Arthur then joined Outso and worked on various projects for PlayStation Home, including the successful MMO, *Sodium*.

"Developing UI for emerging interface technologies with Lightning Fish Games is a fantastic opportunity that I'm very much looking forward to," he said.

Sharon joined the games industry three years ago as an assistant producer and worked her way up to senior producer working with Outso and Lockwood Publishing, the team behind the successful online MMO *Sodium* on PlayStation Home.

"Joining LFG as their international coordinator is a fantastic opportunity to expand the team into India, where there is a melting pot of talent and skill," she said.

"Creating family-oriented games that incorporate such cutting edge video tech is a fascinatingly unique approach to game development and I can't wait to get my sticky fingers into the projects."

Tequila Works, a new Madrid-based development studio, has officially opened for business.

The studio, comprised of staff with experience in companies as varied as Blizzard, Pyro, Mercury Steam, SCEE and Weta Digital, will focus its efforts on developing new IP for digital distribution platforms.

Raul Rubio will serve as studio CEO and creative director, and will be supported by CTO Ruben Alcaniz.

Riot Games, the independent Californian developer of *MMO League Of Legends*, is embarking on an employment rush with the aim to double its development workforce.

The company, which also has offices in Ireland, will begin filling roles in the early part of 2011.

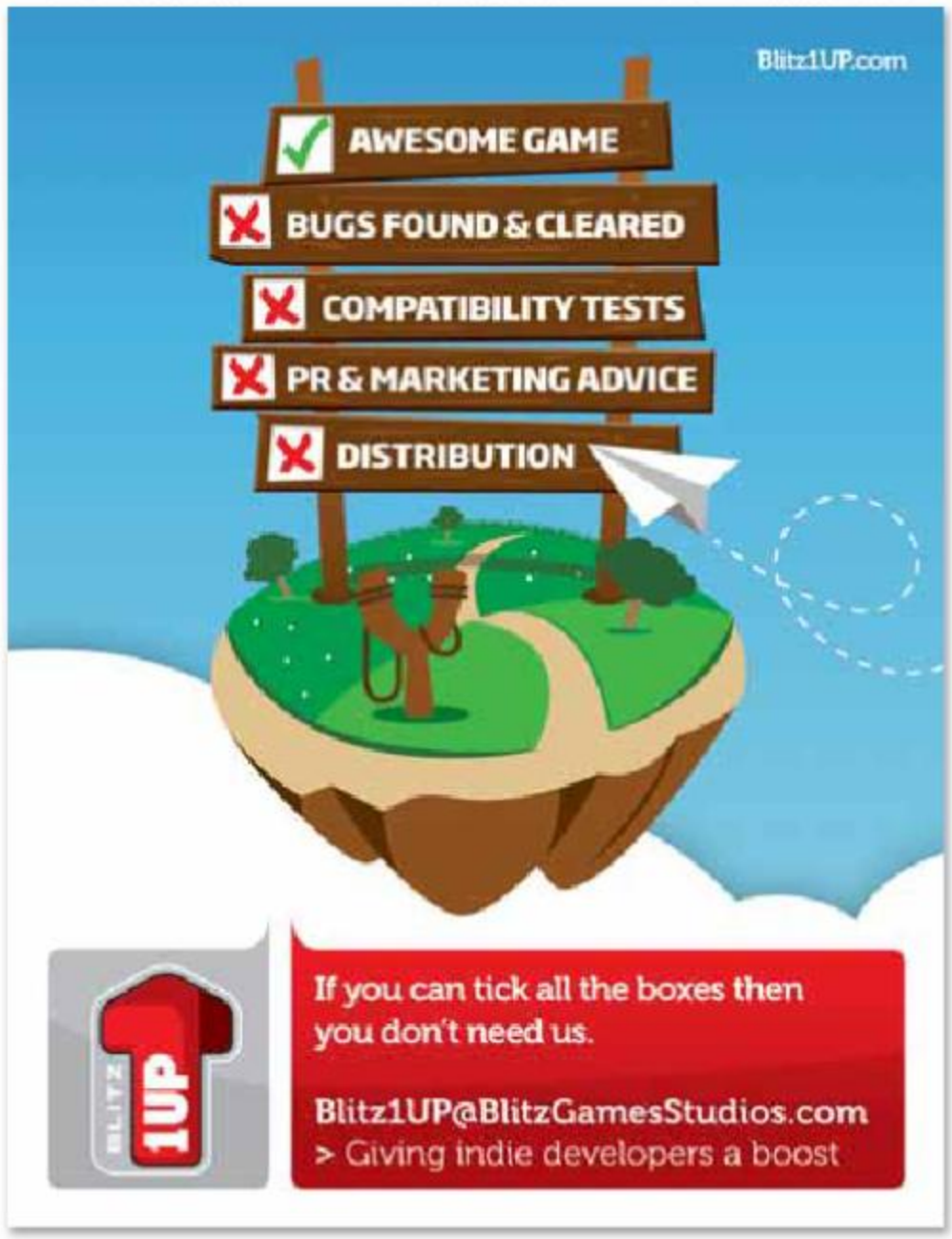
The studio's president, Marc Merrill, told *Develop* he is looking to add more than 100 people to Riot Games.

The studio's breakthrough hit, the MMO *League of Legends*, has a player base of three million users, the company said.

Riot Games' plans for growth tie in with a number of unannounced projects underway at the firm.

Some of the new recruits will help the studio support *League of Legends'* growing popularity, the group said.

Blitz Games Studios 01926 880000 www.BlitzGamesStudios.com

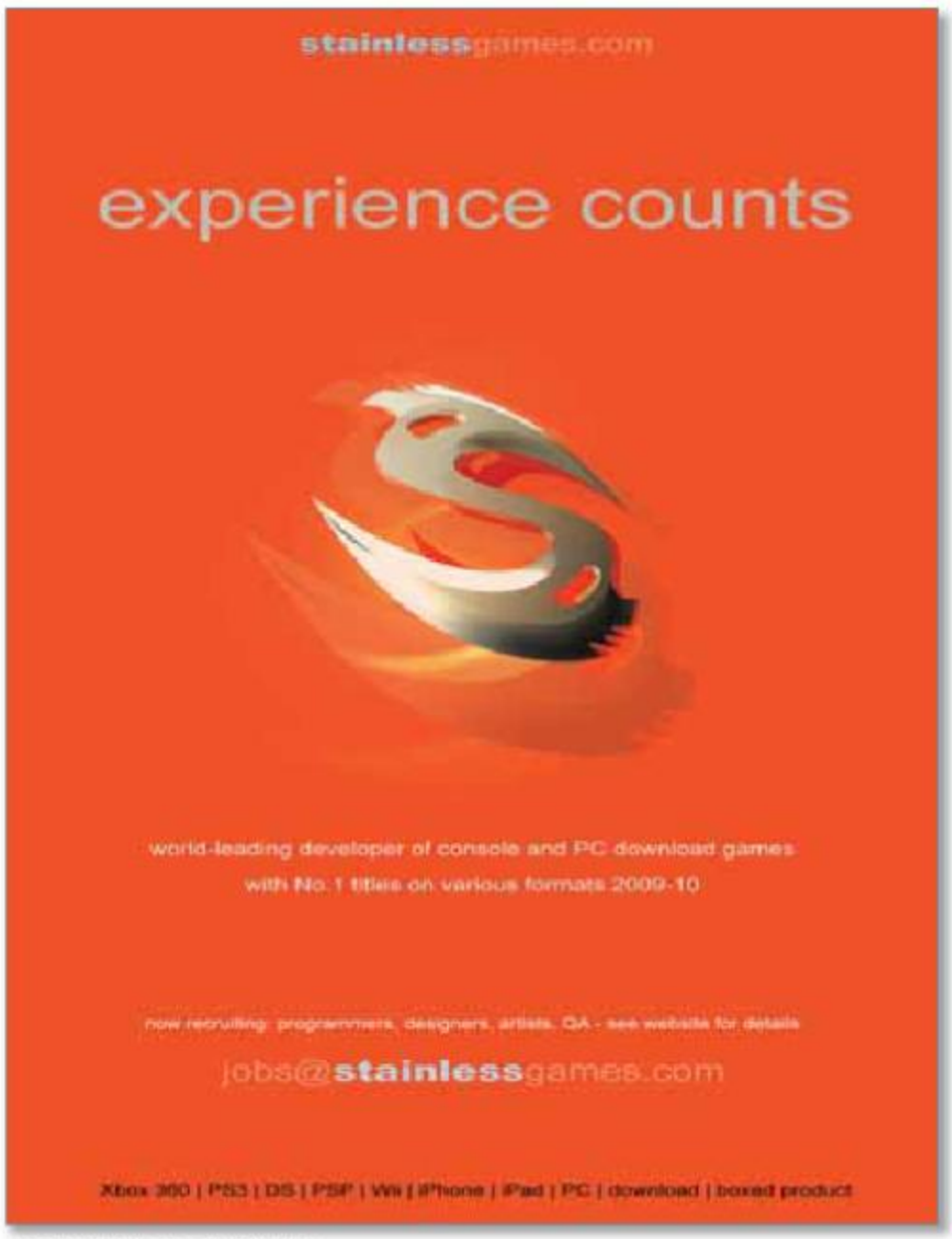


Creative Assembly www.creative-assembly.com

Epic +1-919-870-1516 www.epicgames.com

EPIC GAMES
Epic Games is hiring for positions in production, engineering, art and design.
Visit www.epicgames.com/jobs
CHAIR
EPIC GAMES
PEOPLE CAN FLY
UTAH
NORTH CAROLINA
WARSAW
© 2010, Epic Games, Inc. Epic, Epic Games, the Epic Games logo, the Chair Entertainment logo and the People Can Fly logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Epic Games, Inc. in the United States of America and elsewhere.

Stainless Games jobs@stainlessgames.com www.stainlessgames.com


stainlessgames.com
experience counts
world-leading developer of console and PC download games
with No.1 titles on various formats 2009-10
now recruiting: programmers, designers, artists, QA - see website for details
jobs@stainlessgames.com
Xbox 360 | PS3 | DS | PSP | Wii | iPhone | iPad | PC | download | boxed product

Studio Spotlight

FREESTYLE GAMES

Established in late 2002 by co-founders Jamie Jackson and Chris Lee, Leamington Spa-based outfit FreeStyleGames was originally made up of a small group of staff from other UK studios like Rare and Codemasters.

For the first few years of its existence the firm kept its head down, taking its time before releasing well-received competitive break-dancing title *B-Boy* for the PlayStation 2 and PSP in 2006, published by in Europe by SCEE. The title won a Develop Award, and rocketed the little studio to the attention of the gaming industry and public alike, building a good reputation for its accessible recreation of a popular sub-culture.

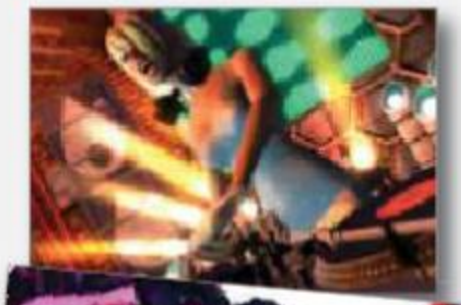
The following year the studio co-developed quiz titles *Buzz! Junior: Robo Jam* and *Buzz! Junior: Monster Rumble* with Liverpool-based Magenta Software for Sony Computer Entertainment, both of which built upon the good business reputation the FreeStyleGames had begun to make for itself with *B-Boy*.

Around one year later FreeStyleGames was purchased for an undisclosed amount by Activision following an extended period of commercial cooperation with the development and publishing powerhouse on downloadable content for the *Guitar Hero* series. It was agreed that the studio would continue to function as an independently run development outfit.

The first game that went into development under Activision would go on to become *DJ Hero*, a spin-off from the *Guitar Hero* franchise of rhythm-based music games.

Released in late 2009, the title pulled together all of the strengths that FreeStyleGames had been building on. It offered tight design with a simple control system that tested the reflexes of the player while opening up an exciting 'way of life' in gaming form, and featuring big music industry names of the likes of DJ Shadow, Cut Chemist, Grandmaster Flash and Daft Punk. The game was very warmly received by specialist media the world over and was, Activision reported, the highest-grossing new IP of 2009 in North America. Two follow-up titles were later confirmed, *DJ Hero 2* for consoles and *DJ Hero 3D* for the Nintendo 3DS.

Going into the new year, FreeStyleGames remain an exciting studio worth paying attention to. In a time when rhythm games seem to be stalling as a whole, the studio has breathed new life into a genre.



CONTACT:
Imperial House
Holly Walk
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire
CV32 4JG

P: +44 (0)845 00 42637
E: Via web
W: www.freestylegames.com

Tools News

This month: Trinigy, FMOD, Stonetrip, Axis3D, Perforce Software, DeNA, Samsung and Android

Game engine vendor **Trinigy** will fully integrate the FMOD Audio Suite within its Vision Engine 8, following a joint initiative between itself and FMOD owner Firelight.

By the end of the project, Trinigy hopes that Firelight's FMOD Ex suite of cross-platform audio tools can be directly accessed via Vision Engine's SDK.

On completion, the partnership will come with a new offer – free FMOD tools for Vision Engine licensees.

"We have successfully worked with the Firelight team for a few years now and many of our customers are utilising and praising their technology," said Trinigy general manager Felix Roeken.

"FMOD not only provides developers with a scalable solution; it supports more platforms than any competing product on the market, including Windows, Linux, iOS and every major video game console, making it the ideal audio solution for our diverse customer base."

Game engine vendor **Stonetrip** has signed a new distribution partnership in a bid to make its Shiva3D technology a success in both China and Taiwain.

The France-based firm will partner with Axis3D, one of the biggest distributors of middleware in China.

Axis3D, which has experience of selling goods across China, will be responsible for establishing and running training and support programmes in the region.

China's booming video games sector is a space that offers huge potential, and could significantly boost Stonetrip's profile on the global stage.

Stonetrip CEO Philip Belhassen said that he beleives Axis3D "has unparalleled expertise and in-depth knowledge of the Chinese market, and we are highly honoured to be working with them".

He added: "Together we can provide the tools and support which will make ShiVa3D the essential cross-platform game engine for the Chinese development community."

UK based **Perforce Software** has launched P4Ant, a new integration between its own Software Configuration Management system and the Java-based build tool Apache Ant.

"Using P4Ant gives Java developers powerful agile tools for managing their source code and building projects faster," said Dave Robertson, international vice president at Perforce Software.

"As development teams grow and projects become more complex, developers need systems that easily scale to support large globally distributed JEE projects," he added.

P4Ant is available for free to those who have already purchased Perforce Server version 2010.1

End-user licenses for the complete solution, including one year of support and maintenance, start at $900 per seat, though volume discounts are available.

Japanese social gaming giant **DeNA** will pre-load its gaming platform, Mobage, onto Samsung's Android handsets worldwide.

The partnership will bring Mobage features such as networking with friends, connecting with players around the world and tracking status to Samsung users.

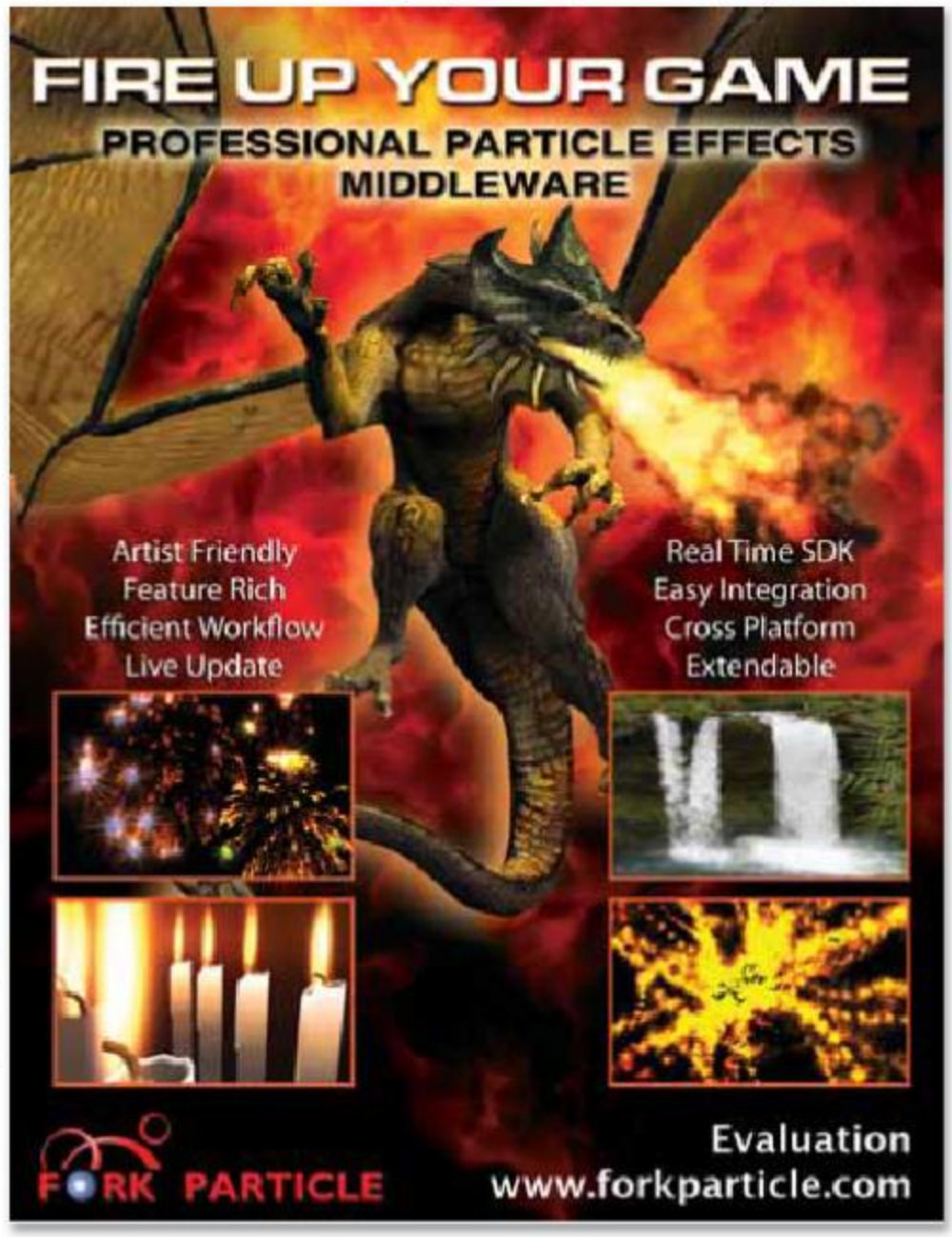
The Mobage social gaming platform for smartphones is spearheaded by DeNA's recently-acquired subsidiary, Ngmoco.

"We are pleased to collaborate with Ngmoco," said Kwanghyun Kwon, senior vice president of Media Solutions Center at Samsung.

"As social gaming features rise in popularity and importance for mobile experiences, Samsung will continuously invest to provide the best experience to our consumers," added Kwon.

In the iPhone space Apple's own system Game Center has somewhat unsettled the progress of other social gaming wannabees, but the equivilent Android sector remains wide open.

Fork Particle 1(925) 417 1785 www.forkparticle.com



StoneStrip www.stonestrip.com

ShiVa3D
"Up and running 3D engine for Android and Palm too"
htc
Create 3D applications and games under a single licence for :
All web browsers, Windows, Mac OS, Linux, iPhone, iPad, Android, Wii and Palm
http://www.stonetrip.com
http://www.facebook.com/stonetrip
http://www.twitter.com/stonetrip

Services News

This month: Mixamo, Hansoft, Quantic Dream and Cubic Motion

The new publisher of *All Points Bulletin* has stuck a long-term deal with the San Francisco online animations outfit **Mixamo**.

GamersFirst's new development arm, Reloaded Productions, will be able to make use of Mixamo's online 3D character animation service for its next string of projects.

The first of those projects is *APB Reloaded*, GamersFirst's revival of the MMO that took down Dundee studio Realtime Worlds following "lacklustre sales".

Reloaded Productions now has access to Mixamo's hundreds of customisable 'canned' 3D animations.

"With Reloaded Productions and upcoming projects underway, it is important for us to leverage a leading-edge 3D animation technology that allows our team to do more with what we have," said GamersFirst PR manager Rahul Sandil.

GamersFirst will launch APB Reloaded in the first half of this year. The title will be free-to-play with a microtransaction economy in place.

Project management tool vendor **Hansoft** has launched an online forum for its customers, where users can share ideas and solve problems.

The forum's categories cover issues relating to best practices, user support, SDK queries, as well as feature suggestions and user feedback.

"Hansoft has a strong and engaged community of users and we wanted to create a space for them to share their experiences, discuss tricky questions with our support managers and chat about production best practices with our senior production experts," said the firm's CEO and co-founder Patric Palm.

"We communicate with our users on a daily basis and I often get involved in interesting conversation that would be great to be able to share with the rest of the community. Now we have a platform for this kind of more open discussions, and I am really excited to see which topics will come up," he added.

Quantic Dream has officially reopened its 'Virtual Actor Studio' motion-capture facility after renovating the site.

The facility, now equipped with 64 optical cameras, captures facial and body movement and voice acting simultaneously, allowing for what the studio has called the highest possible degree of precision.

Renovations on the studio took two months, and included the purchase of a T160 Vicon system and the instillation of soundproof curtains around the main stage.

"We are very excited about the new possibilities at hand with our new Mocap stage," said co-studio CEO Guillaume de Fondaumière.

"Motion Capture is the most cost efficient way to produce high quality animations, and with this new system we are able to offer our clients a service on par with the best available facilities in the World.

"Capturing actors' complete performance in a single take with high fidelity is essential to render the highly realistic 3D characters people expect nowadays in high-definition games and movies, and that is precisely what our new studio can deliver on."

The former CFO of Image Metrics has joined the facial animation specialist firm **Cubic Motion**.

Simon Elms steps up as Cubic Motion's new chairman, and pledged to help expand the company's client base.

He said: "Cubic is well-poised to become the leading supplier in the highly specialised field of facial animation. The company is built around a nucleus of the finest technologists and practitioners in the field and is a very well-structured and well-run business that clearly provides outstanding value to its clients."

Cubic Motion director Gareth Edwards said he had "no hesitation" recommending Elms's appointment as chairman.

"Simon combines extraordinary attention to detail with an entrepreneurial mind. He has a deep understanding of our industry and is widely respected by partners and clients," Edwards added.

Correction: Last month Develop incorrectly suggested that RealtimeUK is primarily located in London. While the CGI studio does have an office in the UK capital, it is headquartered in Westby, Lancashire. Telephone: 01772 682363

Ian Livingstone +44 (0)1483 421 491 www.ianlivingstone.net

Ian
Livingstone
Video Game Composer since 1994
Soundtracks Include
F1-2010 (Codemasters) - Live strings Abbey Rd
Create (EA Games)
Napoleon: Total War (Creative Assembly) - Additional music, live orchestra Bratislava
Battlefield 1943 (Dice EA) - Live orchestra Abbey Rd
Race Driver Grid (Codemasters)
Company Of Heroes (Relic THQ) - Live orchestra Prague
Monopoly: Here & Now The World Edition (EA)
Batman Begins (Eurocom / EA)
Facilities Include
5.1 Studio (Guildford based - clients welcome)
Nuendo / Protools
8 x Kontakt/Play machines, custom orchestra library
Live orchestral packages available
All Styles and platforms covered
Online showreel available at www.ianlivingstone.net
Representation Air Edel +44 (0)207 486 6466
To discuss your future projects contact Ian on
e ian@ianlivingstone.net t +44(0)1483 421491

KPM +44 (0) 203 059 3061 www.playkpmmusic.com

Matinee 01189 584 934 www.matinee.co.uk

Are you hearing voices?
BRING YOUR CHARACTERS TO LIFE WITH MATINÉE'S FREE VOICE CASTING SERVICE
Describe the character you hear and we'll find the right actor to bring it to life. And you'll find our rates much lower than those charged by other production studios.
Free voice casting
Full voice production services
Specialists in UK and US voices
Plus over 80 other foreign languages
Email ali@matinee.co.uk
You'll find us surprisingly easy to work with
Matinée Sound & Vision, 132-134 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7NL
www.matinee.co.uk

Universally Speaking 01480 210621 www.usspeaking.com

Specialist Games Services

Localisation
» Global network of games specialised linguists
» Translators to cover all genres of games
» All languages covered
» In game, scripts, paper parts and marketing translations

Quality Assurance
» All platforms (Sony, Microsoft, Nintendo, PC and Mobile)
» Localisation QA
» Compliance checks for TRC, TCR and LOT approval
» Functionality QA

Audio
» Voice overs across all languages
» Full casting service
» Pre and post production including lip synching
» Highly experienced voice directors and engineers

US

UNIVERSALLY SPEAKING

Universally Speaking
Priory Chambers, Priory Lane, St Neots, Cambs., PE19 2BH, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1480 210621 info@usspeaking.com www.usspeaking.com

Partnertrans +44 (0) 1273 229030 www.partnertrans.com

Develop Magazine 01992 535647 www.develop-online.net

develop DIRECTORY

GREAT ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

CONTACT: ALEX

alex.boucher@intentmedia.co.uk

Tel: 01992 535647

Training News

This month: Bournemouth Uni joins Tiga

Bournemouth University has become the latest educational institution to join games industry trade body Tiga, the college has announced.

The university offers a BSc in Games Technology, which is designed to offer students the chance to both study and practice – the latter being something widely seen as a significant priority for the UK games industry.

The course looks at creating games on a variety of the latest platforms and also addresses the increasingly prominent area of mobile phone game development.

Dr Christos Gatzidis, a lecturer at Bournemouth University has revealed that the institution joined Tiga because it is "committed to working with the industry to further enhance our courses and create benefits for our students".

He added: "We would love to speak to Tiga members about opportunities for guest lectures, research collaboration and student placements."

Tiga CEO Dr. Richard Wilson added: "Tiga is committed to working with its university and academic members to help facilitate greater knowledge exchange to benefit both students, universities and the wider industry."

"We welcome Bournemouth University to Tiga and look forward to working closely with them in the future," he concluded.

The Bournemouth BSc in Games Technology offers an optional 12 month placement that gives students the opportunity to put the skills and knowledge acquired during the first two years of the course into practice, and promises to help students make an informed decision about their future career.

The course also highlights the subject of entrepreneurship through learning in the area of business development, including specific elements lookinf at company creation and business planning.

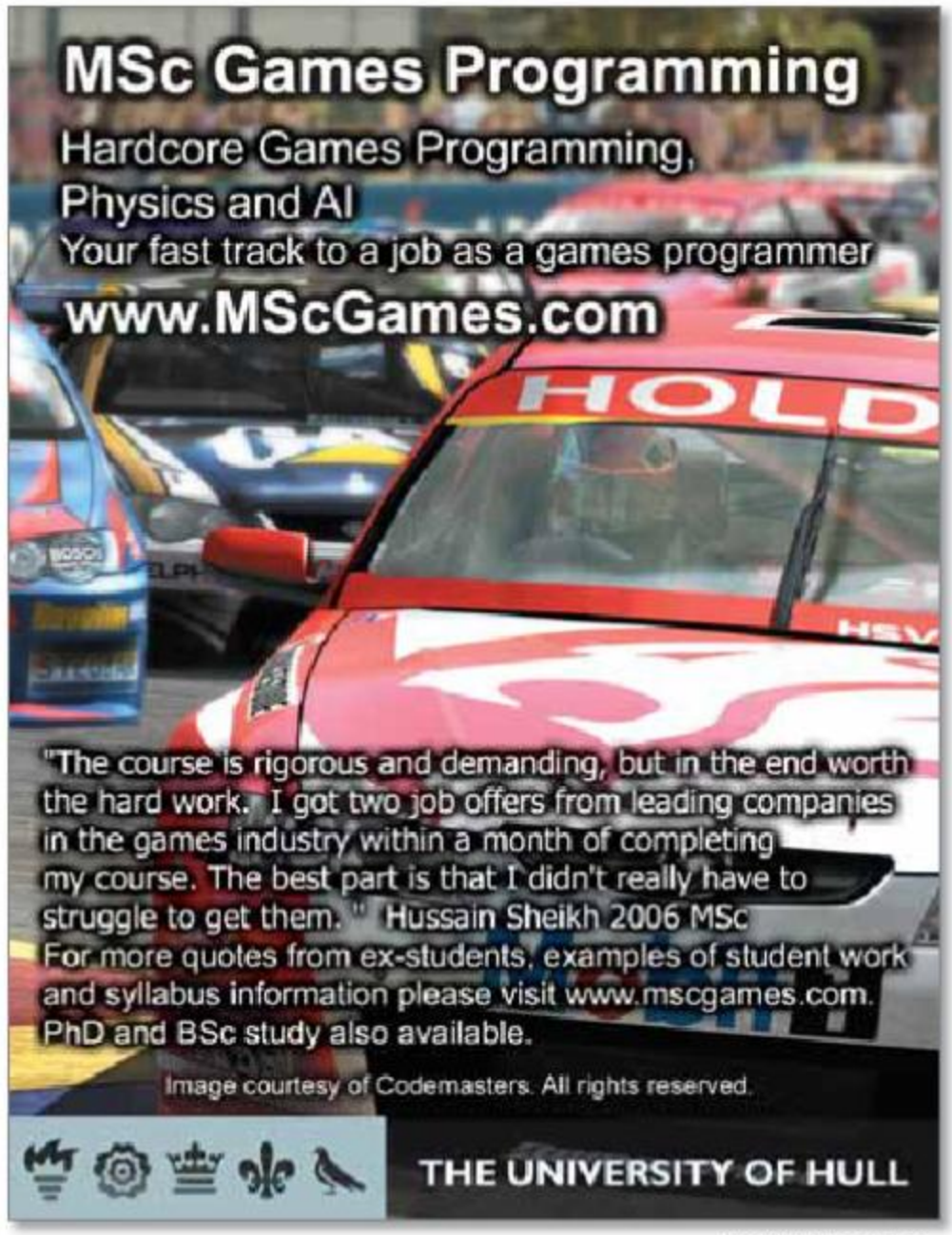
www.bournemouth.ac.uk

Brunel University www.gamesatbrunel.com

City Interactive resumes@city-interactive.com

city interactive
Let Your Talent Shine at City
CITY INTERACTIVE HAS AN EXCITING LINEUP OF TITLES IN THE PIPELINE AND IS OPENING A DEVELOPMENT OFFICE IN THE UK. OPEN POSITIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:
LEAD LEVEL DESIGNER
MUST HAVE EXPERIENCE IN CONSOLE SHOOTERS.
EXPERIENCED GAME & LEVEL DESIGNERS
WORKED ON AT LEAST ONE PUBLISHED CONSOLE TITLE.
PLEASE SEND YOUR RESUME IN CONFIDENCE TO
RESUMES@CITY-INTERACTIVE.COM
AND ONE OF OUR HR REPRESENTATIVES
WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH YOU.

The University of Hull +44(0) 1482 465951 www.mscgames.com


MSc Games Programming
Hardcore Games Programming, Physics and AI
Your fast track to a job as a games programmer
www.MScGames.com
"The course is rigorous and demanding, but in the end worth the hard work. I got two job offers from leading companies in the games industry within a month of completing my course. The best part is that I didn't really have to struggle to get them." Hussain Sheikh 2006 MSc
For more quotes from ex-students, examples of student work and syllabus information please visit www.mscgames.com.
PhD and BSc study also available.
Image courtesy of Codemasters. All rights reserved.
THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

The Big Picture

John Leonhardt, Rovio's North American promotions man, auctions surplus *Anrgy Birds* plushes at the 2011 CES with a friend. Starting bid, 59p. OK, OK: he's actually accepting the Best Mobile Game gong at the 4th Annual Mashable Awards, hosted in Las Vegas. Even so, there's a look in his eye that suggests he's spotted somebody hoarding eggs at the back of the room.

REWIND

A look back at a time when things were simpler for developers

A year in video games: 1998

■ Recognition finally comes as both BAFTA and the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences host their first awards shows embracing 'interactive entertainment'.

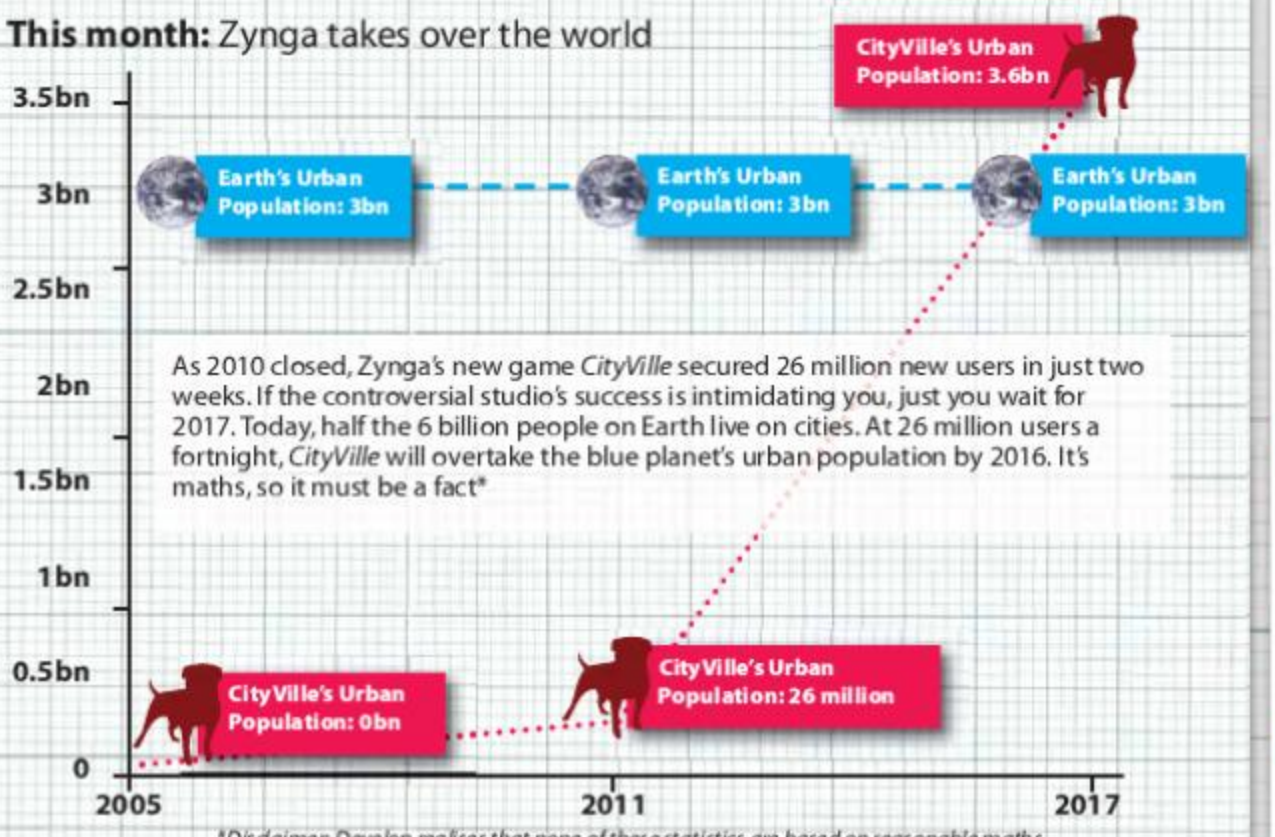
■ Nintendo launches the Game Boy Color, taking Game Boy sales to 118m units. SNK tries to keep up by shipping the Neo Geo Pocket.

■ The sixth console generation dawns with the Dreamcast launch. 13 years later Sega's hardware swansong is still refusing to be silenced.

Wrong Numbers

Stats can be misleading. Forward-project the trends from the close of 2010 and the results show a misguided vision of the future

This month: Zynga takes over the world


CityVille's Urban Population: 3.6bn
3.5bn
3bn
2.5bn
2bn
1.5bn
1bn
0.5bn
0
Earth's Urban Population: 3bn
Earth's Urban Population: 3bn
Earth's Urban Population: 3bn
As 2010 closed, Zynga's new game *CityVille* secured 26 million new users in just two weeks. If the controversial studio's success is intimidating you, just you wait for 2017. Today, half the 6 billion people on Earth live on cities. At 26 million users a fortnight, *CityVille* will overtake the blue planet's urban population by 2016. It's maths, so it must be a fact*
CityVille's Urban Population: 0bn
CityVille's Urban Population: 26 million
2005
2011
2017

Disclaimer: Develop realises that none of these statistics are based on reasonable maths

DEVIPEDIA

Dissecting the hyperbole of games development

SHARED SWEAT EQUITY

shâr.ed swét ek.wi.tee

What 'they' think it means:
In the world of finance, 'sweat equity' refers to the contribution of people's time and effort to a given project; something developers will be all too aware of. Some studio bosses have hijacked the term, added the word 'shared', and dressed up crunch as a big happy family of creative minds working together for some greater communal good.

What it really means:
It means developers should expect crunch, and now have no reason to complain, because everybody is in 'the same boat'. It means an excuse to push everybody to breaking point, even if they need to reserve energy for launch day. Behind closed doors studio heads probably call it 'democratic burnout'. When the staff get home they certainly call their bosses much worse.

■ Epic showcases its new Unreal Engine.

■ Snake returns with the release of *Metal Gear Solid*, charming the world with his gruff machismo and cheery homoerotic quips.

■ Eidos acquires Crystal Dynamics, and at once Gex the Gecko is destined to undergo quite a striking metamorphosis.

develop FORWARD PLANNER

March 2011

QA & Localisation
The final phase of a game's production can be its most crucial step to global success – we talk to leading experts in testing, compliance and translation.

Regional Focus: West Coast USA
From Seattle to San Diego via Los Angeles and San Francisco, we examine Western game development's heartland

Events:
GDC – February 28th to March 4th
Game Connection – March 1st to March 3rd

April 2011

Mocap & Facial Animation
Every facet of character animation examined, from limb animation to lip-synching

Regional Focus: Oxford
We examine the studios and technology companies in this key UK cluster.

May 2011

With *Develop 100* Insertion

Audio
A fresh look at music and audio for games, including in-house teams through to outsourcers.

Regional Focus: Scotland
Studios from start-ups to commercial powerhouses profiled.

June 2011

Middleware
Trends and new releases in third party tech, tools and engines.

Regional Focus: Nordic
We look at games development across Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, Denmark), Iceland and Finland

Event:
E3 – June 7th to June 9th

July 2011

Regional Focus: Guildford
One of UK games dev's many famed clusters goes under the Develop microscope

Events:
Develop Conference – July 19th to July 21st
Develop Awards – July 20th

August 2011

Visual Arts/CG/Game Graphics
New techniques and tech for cutting edge in-game visuals, from 2D on handheld to stereoscopic 3D on console

Regional Focus: Germany
A profile of the German games sector to accompany GDC Europe/Gamescom

Events:
GDC Europe – August 16th to August 18th
Gamescom – August 17th to August 21st, 2011

EDITORIAL enquiries should go through to Michael.French@intentmedia.co.uk, or call him on 01992 535646

To discuss **ADVERTISING** contact Alex.Boucher@intentmedia.co.uk, or call him on 01992 535647

THE FAQ PAGE: ED FRIES

Develop grills a respected figure from the global development sector…

Ed Fries launched the original Xbox, and now runs 3D printing company FigurePrints

Who are you and what do you do?
My name's Ed Fries and I have been working off and on in the game industry since 1982. I built Microsoft Game Studios and launched the Xbox during my 18-year career at Microsoft. I left in 2004 and continue to be active in the game business as an advisor, consultant, and board member.

What are you working on right now?
Earlier this year I released a retro version of *Halo* for the Atari 2600 called *Halo 2600*. I run a company called FigurePrints that uses 3D colour printing to turn *World of Warcraft* characters into statues. I'm one of the owners a game company called Airtight Games where we are working on several new games and I serve on the board of several different game companies.

What was the first video game or product you worked on in the industry?
My first game was called *Princess and Frog* and was published in 1982 – the year I graduated high school – for the Atari 800 home computer. I had written a *Frogger* clone for fun in 6502 assembly language called Froggie. Guys at the California game company ROMOX saw the game but it only said 'by Eddy Fries' on it. Somehow they found the right Eddy Fries in the country (that would be me) and I signed my first game publishing deal.

What was the first video game you ever played? Did you enjoy it?
My dad worked at Boeing and would bring home programmable calculators when I was a kid. I remember playing games like *Lunar Lander* and *Blackjack* on them. Then my mum got a job at Digital Equipment Corporation and would sometimes bring home a printing terminal. We could hook up to the computer in her office over the telephone and play text adventures like the original *Adventure* and *Zork*. Those are great memories from when I was young.

What is your favourite game ever, and for what reason?
My favorite game of all time is *M.U.L.E.* for the Atari 800. I've played it for hundreds of hours with an old group of friends. It still stands up as one of the classics of game design. Now I'm teaching my own young kids to play and they love it too. It just goes to show how unimportant graphics are to making a great game.

What is it that disappoints you about the video games industry today?
Right now it's a tricky time for high-end console games. Huge hits like *Call of Duty* and *Halo Reach* are attracting a bigger and bigger share of the development dollars and leaving less and less for smaller, more innovative titles.

> ***"My favorite game of all time is M.U.L.E. for the Atari 800. I've played it for hundreds of hours."***
>
> Ed Fries, FigurePrint

What do you enjoy about the video games industry today?
I love the diversity and accessibility that exists in the market today. With the rise of digital distribution through things like the app stores and social network games, it is once again possible for a couple guys in a garage to make a big hit.

What hobbies or collections do you have completely unrelated to video games?
I have about a dozen old mechanical calculators. They date from the early 1900s to about the middle of the century and for the most part are big, heavy, steampunk looking machines covered with keys. The exception – and my favourite – is the beautiful and elegant Curta which looks more like a pepper mill. It just goes to show that there's always a better way to do something if you think about it hard enough.

Above: Some of Ed Fries' beloved mechanical calculators

develop
THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY FOR GAMES PROGRAMMERS, ARTISTS, MUSICIANS AND PRODUCERS

Editor-in-Chief
Michael French
michael.french@intentmedia.co.uk

Deputy Editor
Will Freeman
will.freeman@intentmedia.co.uk

Staff Writer
Stuart Richardson
stuart.richardson@intentmedia.co.uk

Online Editor
Rob Crossley
rob.crossley@intentmedia.co.uk

Advertising Executive
Alex Boucher
alex.boucher@intentmedia.co.uk

Production Manager
Suzanne Powles
suzanne.powles@intentmedia.co.uk

Designer
Dan Bennett
dan.bennett@intentmedia.co.uk

Publisher
Stuart Dinsey
stuart.dinsey@intentmedia.co.uk

Managing Editor
Lisa Carter
lisacarter@intentmedia.co.uk

Contributors
Dietrich Banschbach, David Braben, John Broomhall, Nick Gibson, Tatiana Kruse, Mark Rein

intentmedia
Intent Media is a member of the Periodical Publishers Associations

CIRCULATION IS OVER 8,000

Tel: 01992 535646 **Fax:** 01992 535648 **Web:** www.develop-online.net

Develop Magazine. Saxon House, 6a St. Andrew Street. Hertford, Hertfordshire. SG14 1JA
ISSN: 1365-7240 Copyright 2009 Printed by The Manson Group, AL3 6PZ

Subscription **UK: £35 Europe: £50 Rest of World: £70**
Enquiries, please email: dev.subscriptions@c-cms.com Tel: 01580 883 848

Charges cover 11 issues and 1st class postage or airmail dispatch for overseas subscribers

Develop is published 11 times a year, reaching 8,000 readers throughout the UK and international market

PlayStation®Home is hiring!

Visit: **playstationjobs.co.uk**

PS3 Programmers
Associate Producers
Server Programmers
Graphic & UI Designer

Web Programmers
Test Framework Programmer
Tools Programmers
Technical Author

PlayStation® Home

©2010 Sony Computer Entertainment Europe

SUMO ARE RECRUITING

Development Director
Senior Producer
Audio Manager
Sound Designer
Lead Game Designer
Senior Game Designer
Senior Technology Programmer
Tools Programmer
Audio Programmer
Lead Game Programmer
Senior Game Programmer
Game Programmer
Senior Network Programmer
Network Programmer
Concept Artist
Senior Environment Artist
Senior Character Artist
UI Artist / Graphic Designer

スモウ デジタル

a Foundation 9 Entertainment Studio

Contact

careers@sumo-digital.com
Unit 32 Jessops Riverside 800 Brightside Lane
Sheffield S9 2RX Tel: +44 (0) 114 242 6766

SUMO DIGITAL

a Foundation 9 Entertainment Studio